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TRANSMITTAL LETTER TO THE UNITED STATES DESIGNATED/ELECTED OFFICE (DO/EO/US) CONCERNING A FILING UNDER 35 U.S.C. 371				U.S. APPLICATION NO. (IF KNOWN, SEE 37 CFR) 09/622634	
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TITLE OF INVENTION APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR CUTTING OF A WEB, FEEDING IT INTO A PROCESSING LINE AND THREADING IT UP THROUGH THAT LINE					
APPLICANT(S) FOR DO/EO/US PETITJEAN, Gilles et al.					
Applicant herewith submits to the United States Designated/Elected Office (DO/EO/US) the following items and other information					
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This is a FIRST submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371.2. <input type="checkbox"/> This is a SECOND or SUBSEQUENT submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371.3. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This is an express request to being national examination procedures (35 U.S.C. 371(f)) at any time rather than delay examination until the expiration of the applicable time limit set in 35 U.S.C. 371(b)) and PCT Articles 22 and 39(1).4. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A proper Demand for International Preliminary Examination was made by the 19th month from the earliest claimed priority date.5. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A copy of the International Application was filed (35 U.S.C. 371 (c) (2))<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> is transmitted herewith (required only if not transmitted by the International Bureau.b. <input type="checkbox"/> has been transmitted by the International Bureau.c. <input type="checkbox"/> is not required, as the application was filed in the United States Receiving Office (RO/US)6. <input type="checkbox"/> A translation of the International Application into English (35 U.S.C. 371 (c) (2)).7. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A copy of the International Search Report (PCT/ISA/210).8. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amendments to the claims of the International Application under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371 (c) (3))<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. <input type="checkbox"/> are transmitted herewith (required only if not transmitted by the International Bureau).b. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> have been transmitted by the International Bureau.c. <input type="checkbox"/> have not been made; however, the time limit for making such amendments has NOT expired.d. <input type="checkbox"/> have not been made and will not be made.9. <input type="checkbox"/> A translation of the amendments to the claims under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371 (c)(3)).10. <input type="checkbox"/> An oath or declaration of the inventor(s) (35 U.S.C. 371 (c)(4)).11. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A copy of the International Preliminary Examination Report (PCT/IPEA/409)12. <input type="checkbox"/> A translation of the annexes to the International Preliminary Examination Report under PCT Article 36 (35 U.S.C. 371 (c)(5)).					
Items 13 to 18 below concern document(s) or information included :					
<ol style="list-style-type: none">13. <input type="checkbox"/> An Information Disclosure Statement under 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98.14. <input type="checkbox"/> An assignment document for recording. A separate cover sheet in compliance with 37 CFR 3.28 and 3.31 is included.15. <input type="checkbox"/> A FIRST preliminary amendment. A SECOND or SUBSEQUENT preliminary amendment.16. <input type="checkbox"/> A substitute specification.17. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A change of power of attorney and/or address letter.18. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Certificate of Mailing by Express Mail.19. <input type="checkbox"/> Other items or information:					
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px;"><p>17. General Power of Attorney</p><p>18. Express Mailing Label No.: EL031053476US</p><p style="text-align: right; font-size: 1.5em; font-family: cursive;">mailed 8/18</p></div>					

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APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR CUTTING OF A WEB,
FEEDING IT INTO A PROCESSING LINE AND
THREADING IT UP THROUGH THAT LINE

5 FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The invention relates to an apparatus and a method for cutting of a web, feeding it into a processing line, such as a winding unit, and threading it up through that line.

10 BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The feeding of the webs into a processing line, such as a winding system, after a start/restart of the production is a delicate process in particular for thin webs. A known method for such feeding is to cut off manually an edge or a leader of the web, to take it manually through the processing line, launching a defined start program, and when the edge or the leader is secured on a driving element, to cut the web in such a way that the entirety thereof is finally fed into the processing line.

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It will be readily apparent that there is a need for an apparatus and a method that would offer a safe and easy cutting and feeding of the web into the processing line, and that would afford automatic thread up. This need is acute for films with thickness ranging from 100 to 0.4 microns and speeds up to 1000 m/min as well as widths ranging from 1 m to 10 m.

Said need exists for various types of material: polymeric, paper, metallic, etc. "Web" shall thus cover any of this material.

The method of the leader (either manually or automatically) is already known and exemplified in, e.g., United States patent 3,756,527 and 3,743,197. These patents teach the use of a single central leader strip that is inserted into the processing line; once said leader strip is secured the strip is broadened up to the full

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width of the web. The leader strip is transported pneumatically using a slotted tube. This, however, presents drawbacks. Because of the slots, it is not possible to build up a significant pressure gradient along the tube or channel; air speeds and consequently aerodynamic forces are limited. Pulling the leader strip out of the slots is a delicate operation, often ending in breaks with thin films. The tubes hinder the production because centrally located, along the whole line.

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An alternate method using the edges present on both sides of the film or web is disclosed in United States patent 4,611,518. According to this document, the method makes use of said edges being first cut from the central part of the web, then fed into the processing line. The mechanism used for achieving this comprises pressure rolls, constituting a nip, which secures the edges, where the edges are then transported by a double belt (called rope scissors) through the machine. This, however, presents drawbacks. The edges can wrap around the pressure rolls, leading to downtime. The system is very complicated. Edge transport with pressure rolls and with a double belt is not convenient in the case of stretched polymeric films because the edge (aka bead) has then a non uniform thickness and may be corrugated and curled (as a result, the edge can get out sideways).

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SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The object of the present invention is to provide an apparatus and a method for cutting and feeding a web in an appropriate manner for reliable automatic feeding and threading up in a processing line, such as in a winding system, thereby reducing the rate of failure and hence the production costs.

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The invention thus provides an apparatus for cutting of a web (1) conveyed along a conveyance direction (F), and subsequent feeding and threading it up into a processing

line, said web (1) comprising a central portion (1c) and edges (1a, 1b),

said apparatus comprising central cutting means (2a, 2b) for cutting the central portion (1c) laterally and transversely to the conveyance direction (F) and edge cutting means (3a, 3b) for cutting the edges (1a, 1b) transversely to the conveyance direction (F),

said apparatus further comprising at least one edge channel (4a, 4b) for taking up the edge(s) (1a, 1b) into the processing line and threading it(them) through that processing line, said channel(s) showing a section substantially closed and said channel(s) comprising movable lids (6a, 7a, 6b, 7b).

According to one embodiment, the edge channel(s) (4a, 4b) comprise(s) rotatably mounted inner and/or bottom plate (6a, 7a, 6b, 7b) for taking up and releasing the edges (1a, 1b).

According to another embodiment, the edge channel(s) (4a, 4b) is(are) provided with pneumatically driven suction means.

According to yet another embodiment, the edge channel(s) (4a, 4b) is(are) divided into sub-sections.

According to yet another embodiment, the edge channel(s) (4a, 4b) and the corresponding edge cutting means (3a, 3b) are mounted jointly, such as on a carriage (8a, 8b).

According to yet another embodiment, the apparatus comprises two edge channels (4a, 4b).

According to yet another embodiment, the edge cutting means (3a, 3b) comprise knife means for cutting off the edges (1a, 1b). This knife means may be guillotine knives or shears knives.

According to yet another embodiment, the central cutting means (2a, 2b) are mounted to adopt a non-moving state for lateral cutting off the edges (1a, 1b) from the central portion (1c) and a moving state for transversely cutting the central portion (1c) while moving towards each other transversely to the conveyance direction (F).

According to yet another embodiment, the cutting means (3a, 3b) are arranged downstream with respect to the cutting means (2a, 2b).

According to yet another embodiment, the cutting means (3a, 3b) are arranged upstream with respect to the edge channel(s) (4a, 4b).

According to yet another embodiment, the cutting means (3a, 3b) are arranged downstream with respect to the edge channel(s) (4a, 4b).

"Processing line" includes one or several machines such as stretchers, coaters, dryers, surface treating machines, slitters, winders, etc., usually with very complicated film paths. A winding unit will receive the invention with advantage.

The invention also provides a method for cutting a web (1) conveyed along a conveyance direction (F), and subsequent feeding and threading it up into a processing line, said web (1) comprising a central portion (1c) and edges (1a, 1b),

the method comprising the steps of :

(i) cutting off at least one edge (1a, 1b) laterally from the central portion (1c) ;

(ii) cutting said at least one edge (1a, 1b) along a direction transverse to the conveyance direction (F) ;

(iii) taking up said at least one edge into the processing line through edge channel(s);

- (iv) securing said at least one edge in a pulling unit located at the other extremity of the processing line;
- (v) opening the channel(s) to release said at least one edge; and
- 5 (vi) cutting the central portion (1c).

According to one embodiment, the taking up step (iii) comprises sucking the edges into tube channels (4a, 4b).

- 10 According to another embodiment, the method further comprises the step of forming a loop of edges at the vicinity of the edge channel during step (ii).

- According to yet another embodiment, both edges are processed; said both edges can be processed simultaneously or they can be processed independently or they can be processed sequentially.
- 15

- According to yet another embodiment, the cutting step
- 20 (i) comprises a step of keeping the central cutting means (2a, 2b) at a non-moving state for lateral cutting off the edges (1a, 1b) from the central portion (1c).

- According to yet another embodiment, the cutting step
- 25 (ii) comprises a step of instantaneous transversely cutting of the edges (1a, 1b).

- According to yet another embodiment, the cutting step
- (vi) comprises moving the central cutting means (2a, 2b)
- 30 towards each other transversely to the conveyance direction (F).

According to yet another embodiment, the method of the invention uses the apparatus of the invention.

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The invention finally provides an edge channel (4a, 4b) showing a section substantially closed and comprising movable lids (6a, 7a, 6b, 7b).

According to one embodiment, the edge channel (4a, 4b) comprises rotatably mounted inner and/or bottom plate (6a, 7a, 6b, 7b).

5 According to another embodiment, the edge channel (4a, 4b) comprises air jets arranged along it.

The advantage of the apparatus and the method according to the present invention lies in the separated handling of the edges and the central portion of the web for the cutting procedure and feeding procedure, allowing appropriate (automatic) feeding of the web into the processing line, handling of the edges being carried out thanks to specific channels.

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The invention allows the drawbacks of the prior art to be overcome, is not limited in terms of thickness or speed and show high reliability hence low downtime. The invention makes use of the fact that edges, in case of polymeric films, are much stronger than the central part between them and thus break very seldom. If the web breaks during processing, the edges or only one of them will then automatically re-entrain the web.

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25 The edges are known by-products of the manufacturing procedure of the web and distinguish from the central portion by their higher thickness (allowing handling of the web). The invention proposes to cut these two different components of the web in distinct steps by appropriate means to allow for a different treatment of the components in the later feeding procedure.

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Preferably the different cutting treatment of edges and central portion leads to a shape of the transverse cut of the web in such a way that the edges protrude in the conveyance direction. The edges, since they can be better handed, can be fed first into a pulling device or system

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located at the other extremity of the processing line to entrain afterwards the central portion.

Further, it is possible to use cutting means different in shape and operating procedure for the thin central portion and the thick edges. For instance, guillotine knives and shears knives are known as reliable tools for cutting thick but small workpieces and thus are adapted for cutting the edges. For the central portion extending in general over a considerable width, other cutting means transversely movable are more appropriate, such as a Gillette knife or a doctor blade or sharpened needles.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

In the following, the edge channels will be represented with dotted lines for hidden parts at the first occurrence only in each embodiment.

Figures 1a and 1b show a perspective view and a top view, respectively, of an apparatus according to one embodiment of the invention, the web not being cut at all;

Figures 2a and 2b show a perspective view and a top view, respectively, of an apparatus according to one embodiment of the invention, the edges being cut off laterally from the central portion of the web;

Figures 3a and 3b show a perspective view and a top view, respectively, of an apparatus according to one embodiment of the invention, the edges being cut off transversely;

Figures 4a and 4b show a perspective view and a top view, respectively, of an apparatus according to one embodiment of the invention, the edges being taken up by the edge channels;

Figures 5a and 5b show a perspective view and a top view, respectively, of an apparatus according to one embodiment of the invention, the edges being secured in the pulling device and the channels in open position;

Figures 6a and 6b show a perspective view and a top view, respectively, of an apparatus according to one

embodiment of the invention, the central portion being cut transversely;

5 Figures 7a and 7b show a perspective view and a top view, respectively, of an apparatus according to one embodiment of the invention, the central portion being cut transversely up to the meeting point in the middle of the central part, and the central portion being taken in by the edge channels and fed to the processing line;

10 Figures 8a and 8b show a perspective view and a top view, respectively, of an apparatus according to another embodiment of the invention, the web not being cut at all;

15 Figures 9a and 9b show a perspective view and a top view, respectively, of an apparatus according to another embodiment of the invention, one edge being cut off laterally from the central portion of the web;

20 Figures 10a and 10b show a perspective view and a top view, respectively, of an apparatus according to another embodiment of the invention, where the edge channels are activated and the shears knife are also activated, for one given edge, whereby said edge forms a loop within the respective edge channel;

25 Figure 11a and 11b show a perspective view and a top view, respectively, of an apparatus according to one embodiment of the invention, one edge being taken up by one edge channel;

Figure 12a and 12b show a perspective view and a top view, respectively, of an apparatus according to another embodiment of the invention, the one edge being taken up by the edge channels and secured in the pulling device;

30 Figures 13a, 13b to 16a, 16b correspond to figures 9a, 9b to 12a, 12b, respectively, for the other edge;

35 Figure 17a and 17b show a perspective view and a top view, respectively, of an apparatus according to another embodiment of the invention, the central portion being cut transversely;

Figure 18a and 18b show a perspective view and a top view, respectively, of an apparatus according to another embodiment of the invention, the central portion being

taken in by the edge channels and fed to the processing line;

Figure 19 shows a cross-sectional view of a preferred edge channels in the form of a edge channel with rotatable half-part.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

The description is given with respect to a web transfer an winding system following an oven or a stretcher but can be applied to any web processing line. Also, the web is here polymeric, (e.g. polyester such as PET), with thickened edges (aka beads), by comparizon with the remaining web. The blades are arranged in such a way that the central portion, once cut, shows a uniform thickness.

First embodiment.

In the apparatus according to the invention as shown in Figs. 1a and 1b a web 1 is conveyed in a conveyance direction indicated by arrow F at the exit of an oven or stretcher (not shown). The web is composed of two edges 1a and 1b defining therebetween a central portion 1c of the web 1. On its way along conveyance direction F the web 1 passes a central cutting means comprising two sharpened blades 2a, 2b. In the initial condition shown in Figs 1a and 1b the blades are in a lower position not cutting the web. Downstream in the conveyance direction F edge cutting means in the form of two guillotine knives 3a, 3b are mounted over each of the edges. In the present initial condition the guillotine knives are in a stand-by state not cutting the edges 1a, 1b. Further downstream, edge channels 4a, 4b are placed in close vicinity of the transport roll towards the chute 5 to take up the edges 1a, 1b after cutting by the edge cutting means 3a, 3b. The edge channels 4a, 4b are not activated in the initial condition shown in Figs. 1a and 1b and the entire web 1 is falling into the container or chute 5.

In operation the apparatus according to the first embodiment functions as follows :

At a given moment t_0 , as can be seen from figs. 2a and 2b, the blades 2a, 2b are lifted to a position where they protrude through the web between the edges and the central portion thus cutting the web into said central portion 1c and the two edges 1a and 1b. In this position the blades are not moved in the plane of the web, therefore being in a non-moving state. Downstream of the blades the central portion and the separated edges continue to fall in the container 5.

At a selected moment $t_1 _ t_0$, as can be seen from figs. 3a and 3b, the edges 1a, 1b are cut laterally by the edge cutting means 3a, 3b. The cut is performed instantaneously by the two guillotine knives 3a and 3b, which are retracted immediately after cutting. The cutting is transverse to the conveyance direction F, preferably perpendicular to it.

At a further moment $t_2 _ t_1$, as can be seen from figs. 4a and 4b, the edge channels 4a and 4b are activated to take up the cut edges. At this time the central portion 1c of the web continues to fall into the container 5, whereas the cut edges 1a, 1b are taken into edge channels. The edge channels are "activated" in that sense that suction is initiated, e.g. through sucking means such as air jets arranged along the edge channels. Activation of the edge channels is initiated at a time t_2 close to t_1 , such that the edges that will be taken up are that part of the edges that exit from the oven or stretcher (and not that part falling into the chute).

At a moment $t_3 _ t_2$, as can be seen from figs. 5a and 5b, the edges are securely fed into the edge channels, or preferably are securely fed into a pulling unit situated at the other extremity of the processing line (not shown). At that time when the edges are secured in the pulling unit,

one could be sure that the edges will then efficiently perform their role of "entrainer", i.e. they will entrain the central part of the web into the winding unit. At that time, the lids of the edge channels are open, releasing the edges. The edge channels are represented on the figs. without the bottom and inner parts thereof for the sake of understanding, representing the "open position" or "releasing position" of the channels. The edges may then "fall" on another film path, situated below the channels, such as the film path of the processing line from which the web will be further handed.

At a moment $t3' - t3$, the channels may be retracted, if necessary, e.g. to allow the processing line to freely operate.

At a moment $t4 - t3$, as can be seen from figs. 6a and 6b, the blades 2a, 2b start moving along line E in the plane of the web towards each other, in the instant case towards the center of the web, thereby cutting the central portion 1c transversely. The blades 2a, 2b are caused to move transversely to the web conveyance direction at a time where the lids of the channels are open, so as to allow the central part to be entrained between the edges. The attached V-shaped central portion 1c is then fed into the winding unit thanks to the protruding edges 1a, 1b, since these have been secured in the winding unit (e.g. through a driving roll acting as pulling device, not shown), and can securely entrain the central part of the web into the winding unit.

At the moment of arrival of both blades in the center of the web, as can be seen from figs. 7a and 7b, the blades are withdrawn in position below the web to achieve a non-cutting state preventing further cutting of the central portion. The blades are then moved to their initial position below the web near the edges. The result of the operation of the blades 2a, 2b leads to a V-shaped

transverse cut of the central part while the edges protrude in conveyance direction F. The angles have been exaggerated for sake of understanding; given the speed of the line, the angle of the cut piece shall be very acute.

5 In that configuration, it shall be understood that the steps represented figures 6 and 7 will be somehow "fused" together.

10 The edge cutting means and the central cutting means can be placed along the same line perpendicular to the conveyance direction, or they can be placed at different locations, preferably the edge cutting means (guillotine knives 3a, 3b) are located downstream with respect to the central part cutting means (blades 2a, 2b). The guillotine
15 knives (3a, 3b) are preferably placed upstream with respect to the edge channels.

The sequence of the cutting and taking up steps and hence the moments in time t_0 , t_1 , t_2 , t_3 and t_4 can be
20 varied, as will be appreciated by the skilled man. For example, activation of the guillotine knives should preferably be such that the latter be activated at a point of time where the web passing at the location of the guillotine knives is already cut by the blades into its
25 central part and its edges. Activation of the guillotine knives and the edge channels may be coupled, i.e. they can be activated at the same time or at times separated by a set time-period. The moving of the blades 2a, 2b, for transverse cutting of the central portion, may be commanded
30 by the activation (opening) of the lids of the edge channels, optionally after a set time-period. Also, and preferably, the activation of the blades should be commanded by the detection of the secured feeding of the edges into the pulling device.

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It is also possible to proceed with one edge at a time. In that case, one edge will be first secured in the pulling device, the lid of the first channel will be open, then the

second edge will be secured in the pulling device, and only by then the blades 2a and 2b will be moved towards each other. It is also possible to proceed with one edge only.

5 Second embodiment (and best mode).

The second embodiment is given with respect to that embodiment where each edge is handled separately. Of course, the second embodiment can be worked out with both edges handled simultaneously.

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In the apparatus according to the invention as shown in Figs. 8a and 8b a web 1 is as in the first embodiment. On its way along conveyance direction F the web 1 passes a central cutting means comprising two sharpened blades 2a, 2b. In the initial condition shown in Figs 8a and 8b the blades are in a lower position not cutting the web. Downstream in the conveyance direction F, in the vicinity of the roll diverting the web into the chute 5, are located edge channels 4a, 4b and further downstream are located the edge cutting means in the form of two shears 3a, 3b. In the second embodiment, the edge channels and the shears are mounted jointly through a carriage 8a, 8b. The carriage 8a, 8b, allows for a well-defined placement of the edge channels with respect to the exiting web, in all three directions. The carriage 8a, 8b, will only be represented in fig. 8a and 8b, and will not be represented in the following. In the present initial condition the shears are in a stand-by state (open position) not cutting the edges 1a, 1b. The edge channels 4a, 4b are not activated in the initial condition shown in Figs. 8a and 8b and the entire web 1 is falling into the container or chute, which will no longer be represented in the figures in relation with the second embodiment.

35 In operation the apparatus according to the second embodiment functions as follows :

At a given moment t_{0a} , as can be seen from figs. 9a and 9b, the blade 2a is lifted to a position where it protrudes through the web between the edge and the central portion thus cutting the web into said central portion 1c and one edge 1a. In this position the blade is not moved in the plane of the web, therefore being in a non-moving state. Downstream of the blade the central portion and the separated edge continue to fall into the container 5.

At a moment $t_{1a} _ t_{0a}$, as can be seen from figs. 10a and 10b, the edge 1a is cut laterally by the shears 3a. The cutting is not performed instantaneously as in the first embodiment, but will have a duration until moment t_{2a} . During that interval of time $(t_{2a} - t_{1a})$, the edge is "blocked" at the shears level, and since the film is still coming out from the oven or stretcher, a loop will build up with the incoming edge. The channel being activated, e.g. by suction means (not represented), the loop will form into the channel. The loop is represented by the dotted line and may extend into the channel by a distance that can be varied up to one meter or less or more. For example, $(t_{2a} - t_{1a})$ can be about 0.1 s, the speed of the film can be 5 m/s, thus the loop will have a length of 0.25 m. The suction means are not represented here but are conventional (see first embodiment).

At a moment $t_{2a} _ t_{1a}$, as can be seen from figs. 11a and 11b, the edge 1a is finally cut by the shears 3a. The edge channel takes up (here sucks) the cut edge 1a. At this time the central portion 1c of the web and the edge 1b to which it is still attached continue to fall into the container 5. The edge channel is "activated" in the same sense as above (activation may be varied or not during transport of the edge). The edge 1a is then secured in the pulling device (not shown) or any other equivalent means of the driving unit.

At a further moment $t3a _ t2a$, as can be seen from
figs. 12a and 12b, the lids of the edge channel 4a are
open, releasing the edge; in fact the bottom and inner
parts of the edge channels are not represented for the sake
of understanding; further details can be seen on fig. 19.
As in the first embodiment, the edge may "fall" onto
another film path, and the channel 4a may be retracted.

The same sequence as above is then initiated for the
other edge, at varying times $t0b$, $t1b$, $t2b$, $t3b$ and $t4b$,
and is illustrated in figures 13a to 16b. At the end of
the second sequence, the situation is the following: the
two edges are transported through the processing line and
secured in a pulling device situated at the other
extremity, and they are ready to perform their role of
entrainer.

It should be noted that the lids of the channel 4a can
be open before the sequence for edge 1b starts, or it can
be open after the sequence is completed, e.g.
simultaneously with the lid of channel 1b. Also, the
channels may be retracted if needed by the operation of the
processing line (transport rolls to be moved at given
positions, etc.).

At a moment $t5 _ t4a/t4b$, as can be seen from figs. 17a
and 17b, the blade 2b starts moving along line E in the
plane of the web towards blade 2a, thus creating a movement
of the blades towards each other, thereby cutting the
central portion 1c transversely. The blade 2b is caused to
move transversely to the web conveyance direction at a time
where both edge channels are open. The open state is of
course required for allowing the central part of the film
to be fed into the winding unit (otherwise the tube-like
channels would prevent the central part from being
conveyed).

In the moment of arrival of blade 2b at the location of blade 2a at the border of the central part of the web, as can be seen from figs. 18a and 18b, the blades are withdrawn in position below the web to achieve a non-cutting state preventing further cutting of the central portion. The blades are then moved to their initial position below the web near the edges. The result of the operation of the blades 2a, 2b leads to a N-shaped transverse cut of the central part while the edges protrude in conveyance direction F. The attached N-shaped central portion 1c is then fed into the processing line thanks to the protruding edges 1a, 1b, acting as "entrainer". As indicated in the first embodiment, the angles have been exaggerated for sake of understanding; given the speed of the line, the angle of the cut piece shall be very acute. In that configuration, it shall be understood that the steps represented figures 17 and 18 will be somehow "fused" together.

As shown, the edge cutting means (shears 3a, 3b) are located downstream with respect to the central part cutting means (blades 2a, 2b). The shears (3a, 3b) are also located downstream with respect to the edge channels.

The sequence of the cutting, loop formation and taking up steps and hence the moments in time t_0 , t_1 , t_2 , t_3 etc. can be varied. In the embodiment shown in figs. 8a to 15b, the following sequences can be obtained. Activation of the shears, and consequently formation of the loop should preferably be such that the shears be activated at a point of time where the web passing at the location of the shears is already cut by the blades into its central part and its edges. Activation of the shears and the edge channels may be coupled, i.e. they can be activated at the same time or at times separated by set time-period. The moving of the blade 2a (2b), for transverse cutting of the central portion, may be commanded by the activation of selected units of the apparatus (shears 3a, 3b; detection of the

secured feeding of said edges into the pulling device;
opening of the lids of the channels; retraction of the
channels), optionally after a set time-period, preferably
at such time immediately before the processing line is in
5 production mode.

The following sequence is also possible:

- edge 1a is first threaded up as described above;
- 10 - blade 2b is lifted up (nothing else occurs);
- blade 2a moves towards blade 2b;
- as soon as blade 2a reaches blade 2b, both blades
(2a, 2b) are withdrawn and shears 3b are activated
15 simultaneously. The web central part 1c will then
entrain the edge 1b. Alternatively, shears 3b can be
replaced with guillotine as in the first embodiment.

Fig. 19 shows a cross-sectional view of the edge
channel. As shown, these edge channels (4a, 4b) can be
20 equipped with a rotatably mounted side comprised of inner
and bottom parts 6a, 7a and 6b, 7b, respectively, these
rotatably mounted sides engaging/releasing the edges. Said
rotatably mounted side can be either the inner part, the
bottom part or both. In case the rotatably mounted side is
25 the inner part 6a, 6b (facing each other), the edge
channels will be converted into horizontal U-shaped guides,
allowing the entire web to be driven between them. The
edge channels can then be retracted laterally. In case the
rotatably mounted side is the bottom part 7a, 7b (facing
30 down), the edge channels will be converted into vertical U-
shaped guides (with the opening facing down), and in order
for the web to be properly conveyed, it will fall at a
position situated below the edge channels. The edge
channels can then be retracted upwards. Preferably, the
35 rotatably sides may be comprised of both the inner and
bottom parts of the edge channels. This latter embodiment
is shown in fig. 19, where the dotted line represents the
position where the inner and bottom parts are open. The

lids may also be comprised of three sides of the channel. Also, the movable lids may be moved by translation, instead of by rotation. The edge may thus get out upwards, downwards, sideways or diagonally.

5

The channels are activated thanks to, e.g. air jets, pneumatically driven. The proper number of air jets is arranged along the channel. The channel need not be of one piece; it can comprise several sub-units which may be spaced or close each to the other. The air jets may be comprised of a Venturi tube arranged at the end of the channel. The Venturi is fed with pressurized air that will entrain ambient air at high speed through the channel, which ambient air will ultimately convey the edge.

10

15

The channel edges represented figs. 1a through 15b can be at a level within the conveyance direction F, or they can be oriented with respect to same, either upwards or downwards, and/or they can be shifted upwards or downwards with respect to the web plane. For example, the edge channels can form with the conveyance direction any angle (for from 15 to 30°), upwards, and can be shifted upwards (e.g. according to a vertical position) with respect to the web plane. Also, since the width of the web can be modified, the edge channels are preferably mounted on a carriage that will place them at the appropriate position to accommodate the width of the web, as described in figs. 8a to 14a. The carriage will also preferably carry the cutting knives (3a, 3b) when the edge channels and the cutting knives (e.g. the shears) are mounted jointly.

20

25

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With a cutting means such as a high speed laser beam or pressurized water beam the placement with respect to the conveyance direction and within the apparatus and the sequence of the cutting steps can be modified appropriately.

35

While the description has been given with respect to specific embodiments (blades, guillotine, shears, scissors, edge channels), it is clear that the invention is not limited to these embodiments. Also, the two embodiments disclosed can be combined as far as one or more steps are concerned.

While the description has been given with respect to the handling of the two edges, it is clear that the invention can be worked out with only one edge. The skilled man will appreciate any adaptation of the above description to achieve the invention with one edge only.

CLAIMS

1. An apparatus for cutting of a web (1) conveyed along a conveyance direction (F), and subsequent feeding
5 and threading it up into a processing line, said web (1) comprising a central portion (1c) and edges (1a, 1b), said apparatus comprising central cutting means (2a, 2b) for cutting the central portion (1c) laterally and transversely to the conveyance direction (F) and edge
10 cutting means (3a, 3b) for cutting the edges (1a, 1b) transversely to the conveyance direction (F), said apparatus further comprising at least one edge channel (4a, 4b) for taking up the edge(s) (1a, 1b) into the processing line and threading it(them) through that
15 processing line, said channel(s) showing a section substantially closed and said channel(s) comprising movable lids (6a, 7a, 6b, 7b).
2. Apparatus for cutting and feeding a web (1)
20 according to claim 1, wherein the edge channel(s) (4a, 4b) comprise(s) rotatably mounted inner and/or bottom plate (6a, 7a, 6b, 7b) for taking up and releasing the edges (1a, 1b).
- 25 3. Apparatus for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the edge channel(s) (4a, 4b) is(are) provided with pneumatically driven suction means.
- 30 4. Apparatus for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the edge channel(s) (4a, 4b) is(are) divided into sub-sections.
- 35 5. Apparatus for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the edge channel(s) (4a, 4b) and the corresponding edge cutting means (3a, 3b) are mounted jointly.

6. Apparatus for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to claim 5, wherein the edge channel(s) (4a, 4b) and the edge cutting means (3a, 3b) are mounted jointly on a carriage (8a, 8b).

5

7. Apparatus for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to any one of claims 1 to 6, comprising two edge channels (4a, 4b).

10 8. Apparatus for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to any one of claims 1 to 7, wherein the edge cutting means (3a, 3b) comprise knife means for cutting off the edges (1a, 1b).

15 9. Apparatus for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to claim 8, wherein the knife means (3a, 3b) are guillotine knives.

20 10. Apparatus for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to claim 8, wherein the knife means (3a, 3b) are shears knives.

25 11. Apparatus for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to any one of claims 1 to 10, wherein the central cutting means (2a, 2b) are mounted to adopt a non-moving state for lateral cutting off the edges (1a, 1b) from the central portion (1c) and a moving state for transversely cutting the central portion (1c) while moving towards each other transversely to the conveyance direction (F).

30

12. Apparatus for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to any one of claims 1 to 11, wherein the cutting means (3a, 3b) are arranged downstream with respect to the cutting means (2a, 2b).

35

13. Apparatus for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to any one of claims 1 to 12, wherein the cutting means

(3a, 3b) are arranged upstream with respect to the edge channel(s) (4a, 4b).

5 **14.** Apparatus for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to any one of claims 1 to 12, wherein the cutting means (3a, 3b) are arranged downstream with respect to the edge channel(s) (4a, 4b).

10 **15.** A method for cutting a web (1) conveyed along a conveyance direction (F), and subsequent feeding and threading it up into a processing line, said web (1) comprising a central portion (1c) and edges (1a, 1b), the method comprising the steps of :

- 15 (i) cutting off at least one edge (1a, 1b) laterally from the central portion (1c) ;
- (ii) cutting said at least one edge (1a, 1b) along a direction transverse to the conveyance direction (F) ;
- (iii) taking up said at least one edge into the processing line through edge channel(s);
- 20 (iv) securing said at least one edge in a pulling unit located at the other extremity of the processing line;
- (v) opening the channel(s) to release said at least one edge; and
- (vi) cutting the central portion (1c).

25

16. Method for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to claim 15, wherein the taking up step (iii) comprises sucking the edges into tube channels (4a, 4b).

30 **17.** Method for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to claim 15 or 16, further comprising the step of forming a loop of edges at the vicinity of the edge channel during step (ii).

35 **18.** Method for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to any one of claims 15 to 17, wherein both edges are processed.

19. Method for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to claim 18, wherein said both edges are processed simultaneously.

5 **20.** Method for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to claim 18, wherein said both edges are processed independently.

21. Method for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to claim 20, wherein said both edges are processed sequentially.

22. Method for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to any one of claims 15 to 21, wherein the cutting step (i) comprises a step of keeping the central cutting means (2a, 2b) at a non-moving state for lateral cutting off the edges (1a, 1b) from the central portion (1c).

23. Method for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to any one of claims 15 to 22, wherein the cutting step (ii) comprises a step of instantaneous transversely cutting of the edges (1a, 1b).

24. Method for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to any one of claims 15 to 23, wherein the cutting step (vi) comprises moving the central cutting means (2a, 2b) towards each other transversely to the conveyance direction (F).

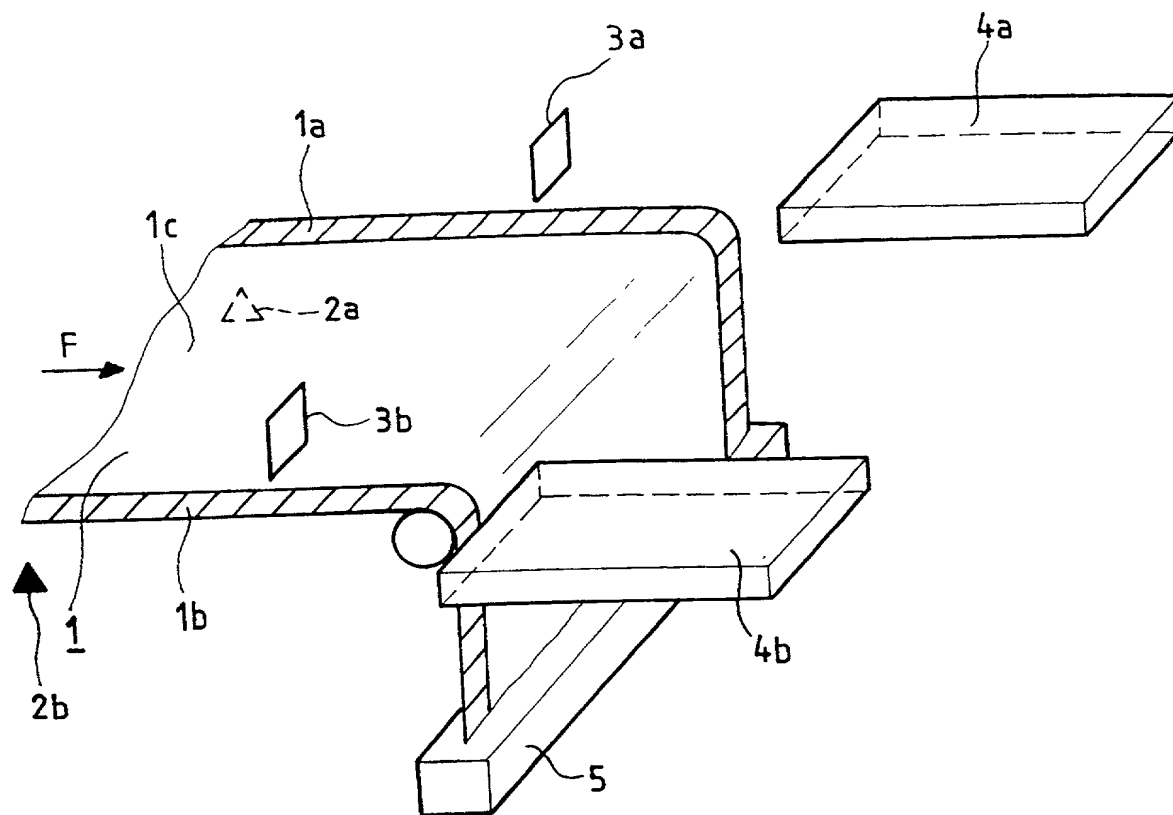
25. Method for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to any one of claims 15 to 24, using the apparatus of any one of claims 1 to 14.

26. Edge channel (4a, 4b) showing a section substantially closed and comprising movable lids (6a, 7a, 6b, 7b).

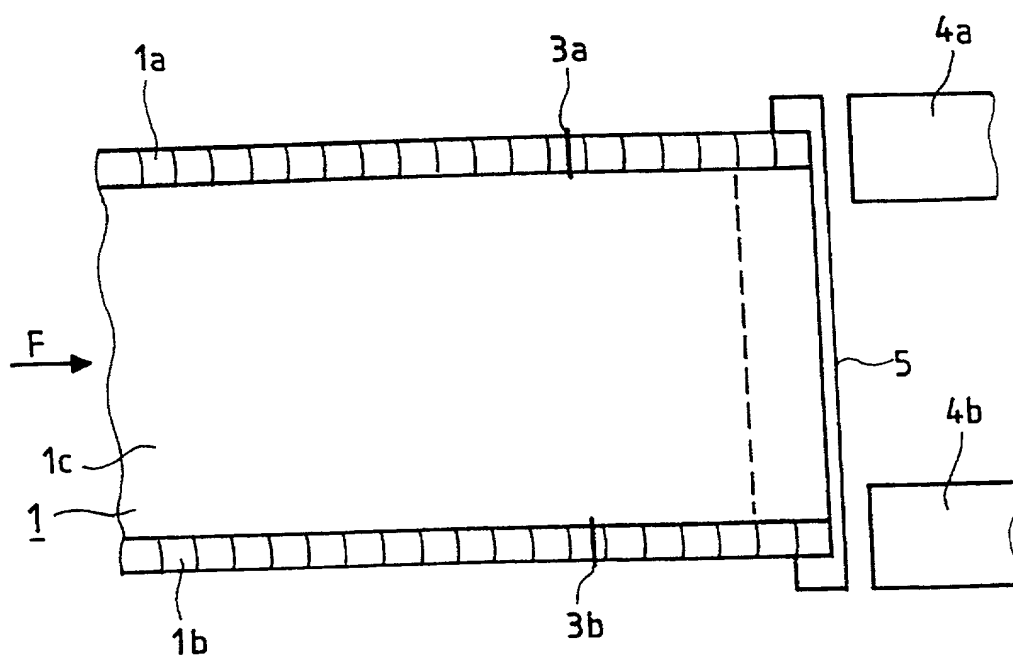
35

27. Edge channel (4a, 4b) according to claim 26, comprising rotatably mounted inner and/or bottom plate (6a, 7a, 6b, 7b).

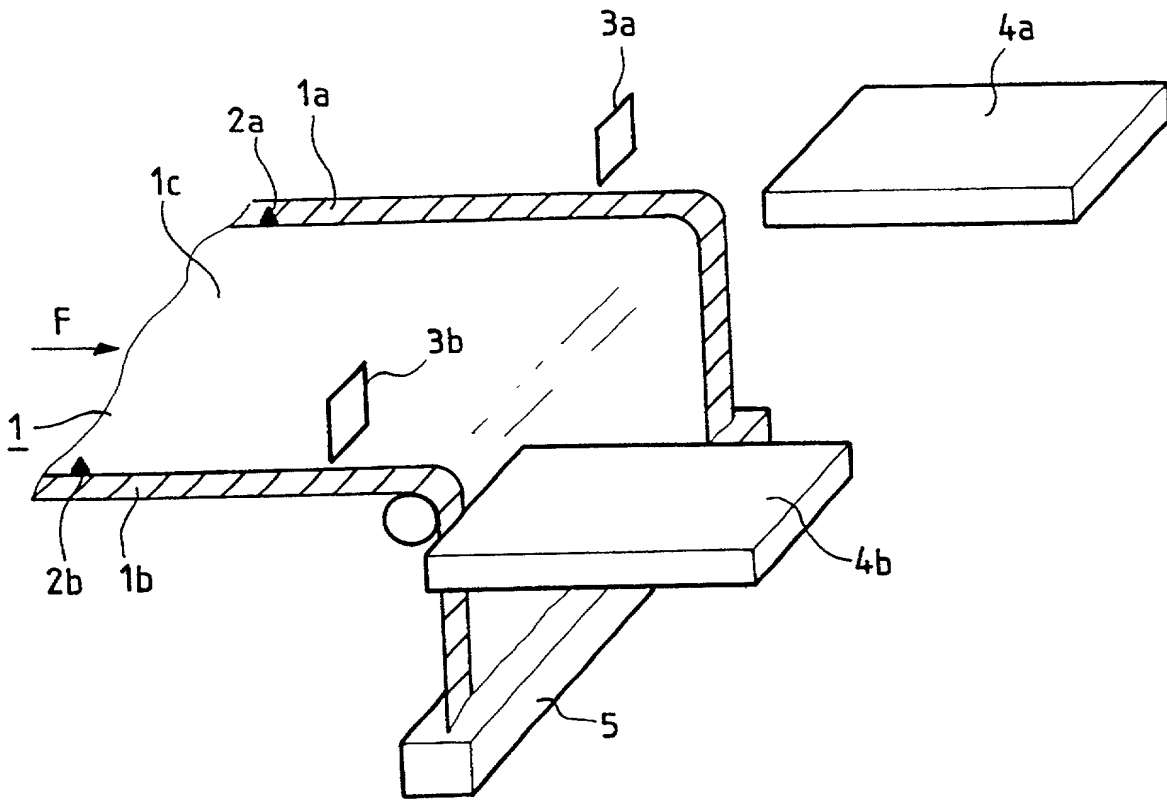
28. Edge channel (4a, 4b) according to claim 26 or 27, comprising air jets arranged along it.



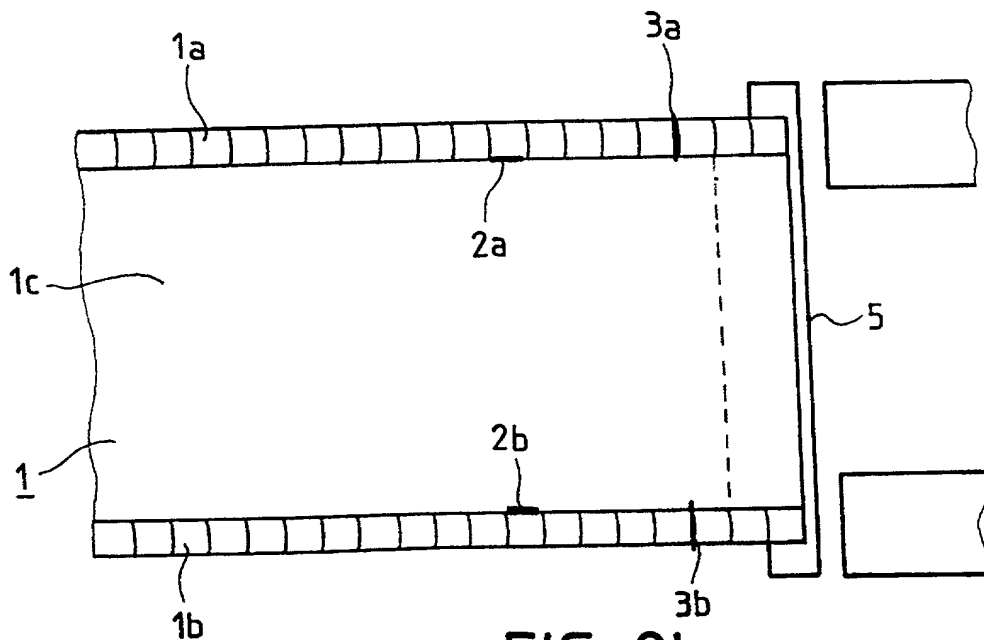
FIG_1a



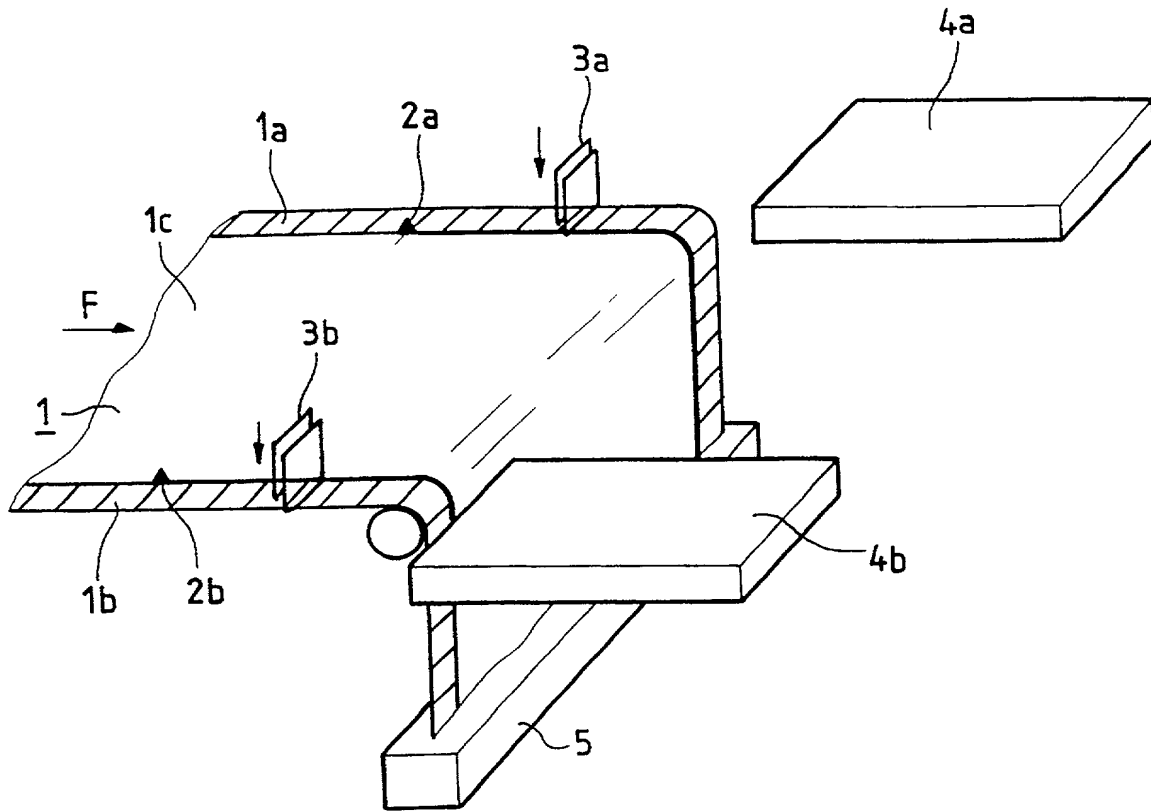
FIG_1b



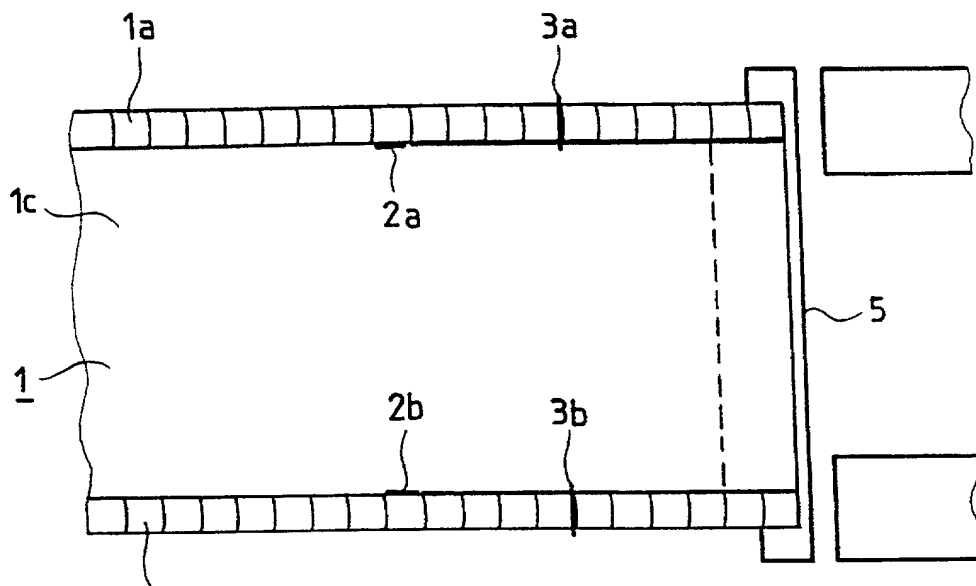
FIG_2a



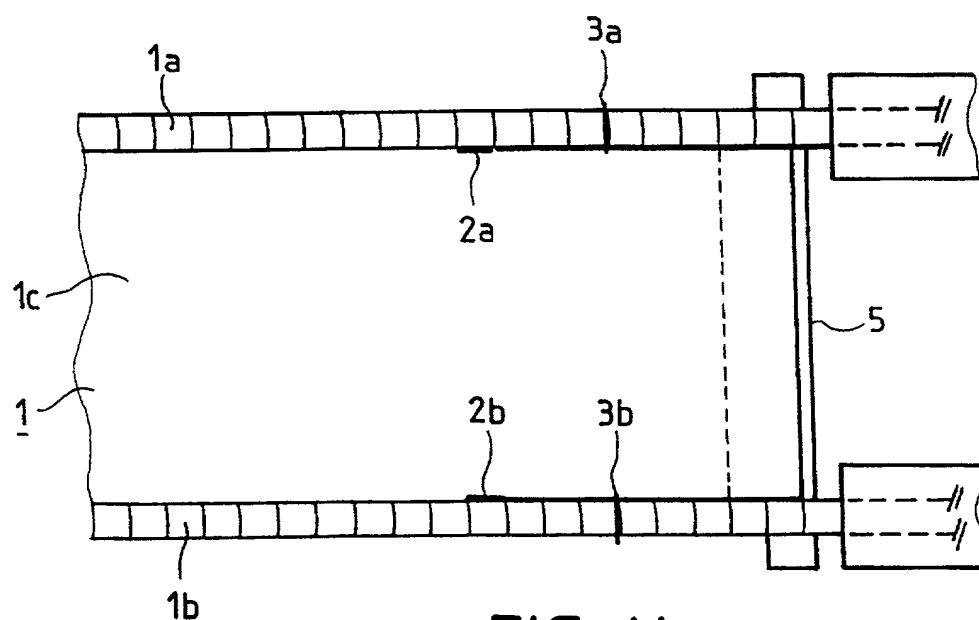
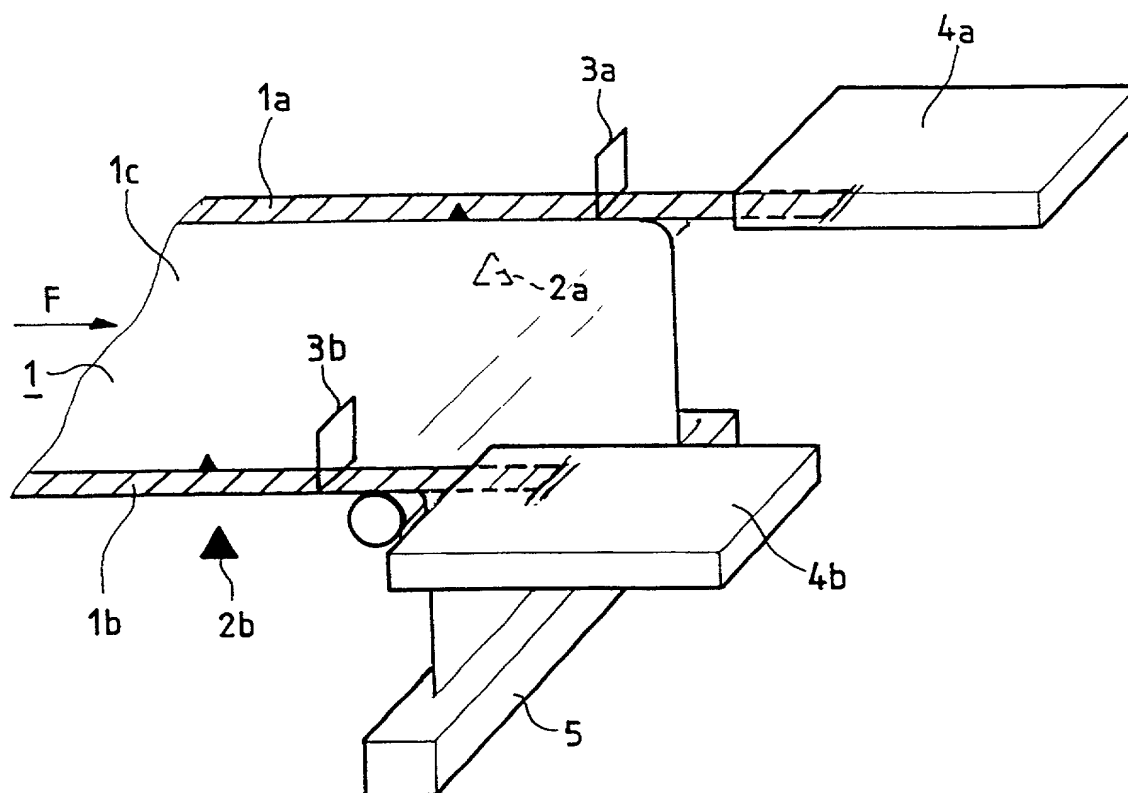
FIG_2b



FIG_3a



FIG_3b



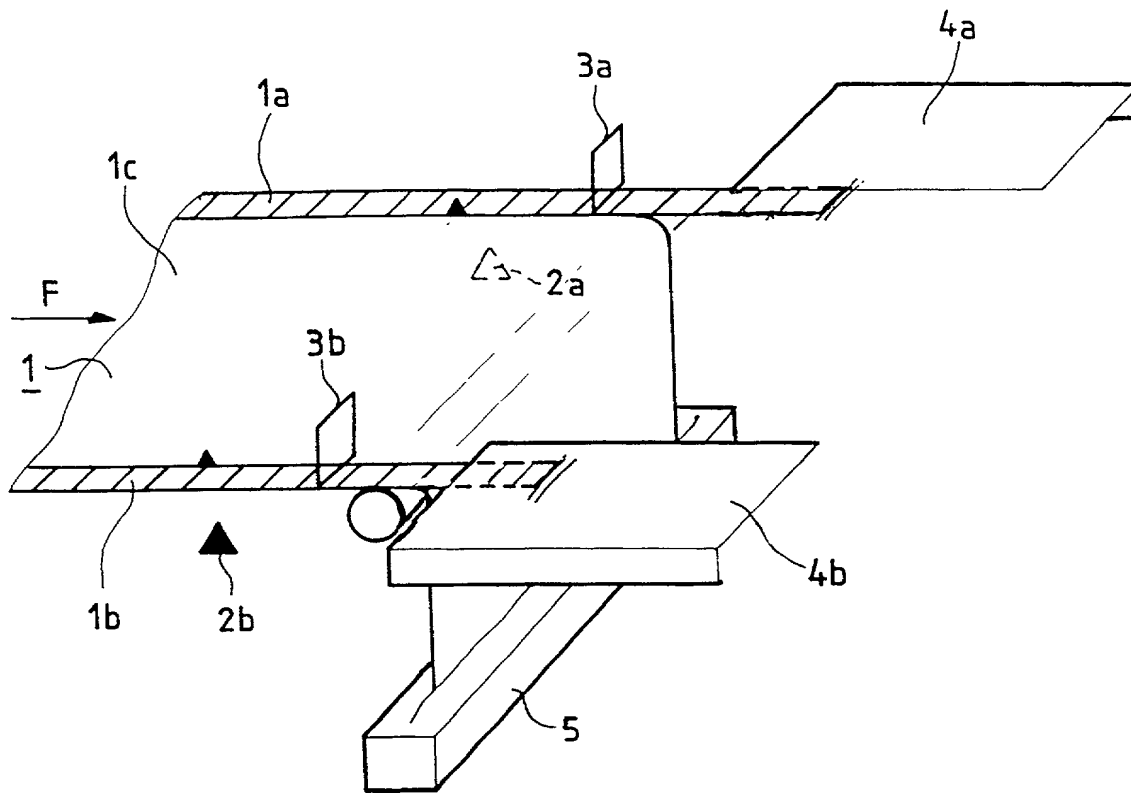


FIG. 5a

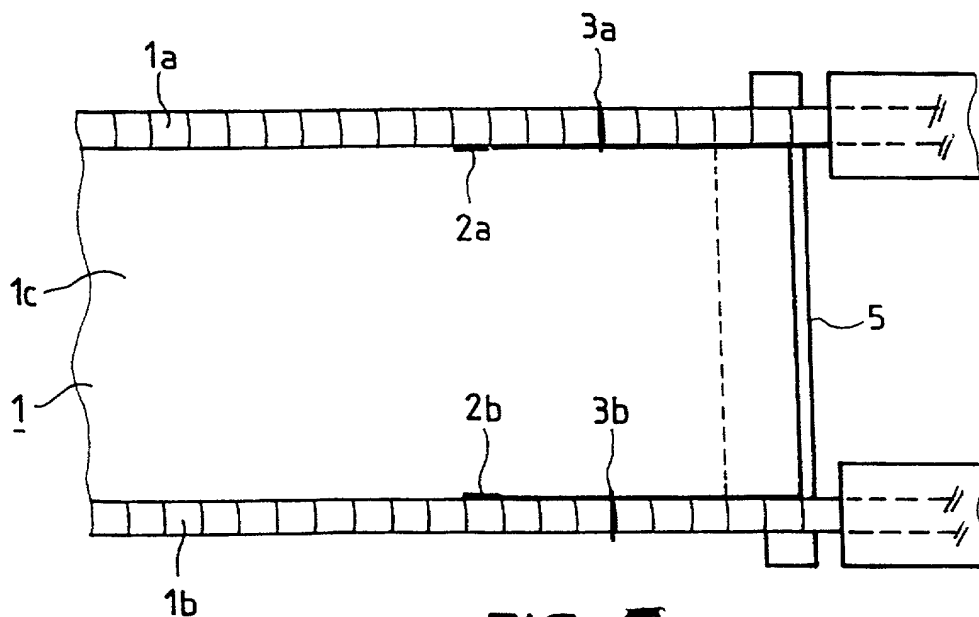


FIG. 5b

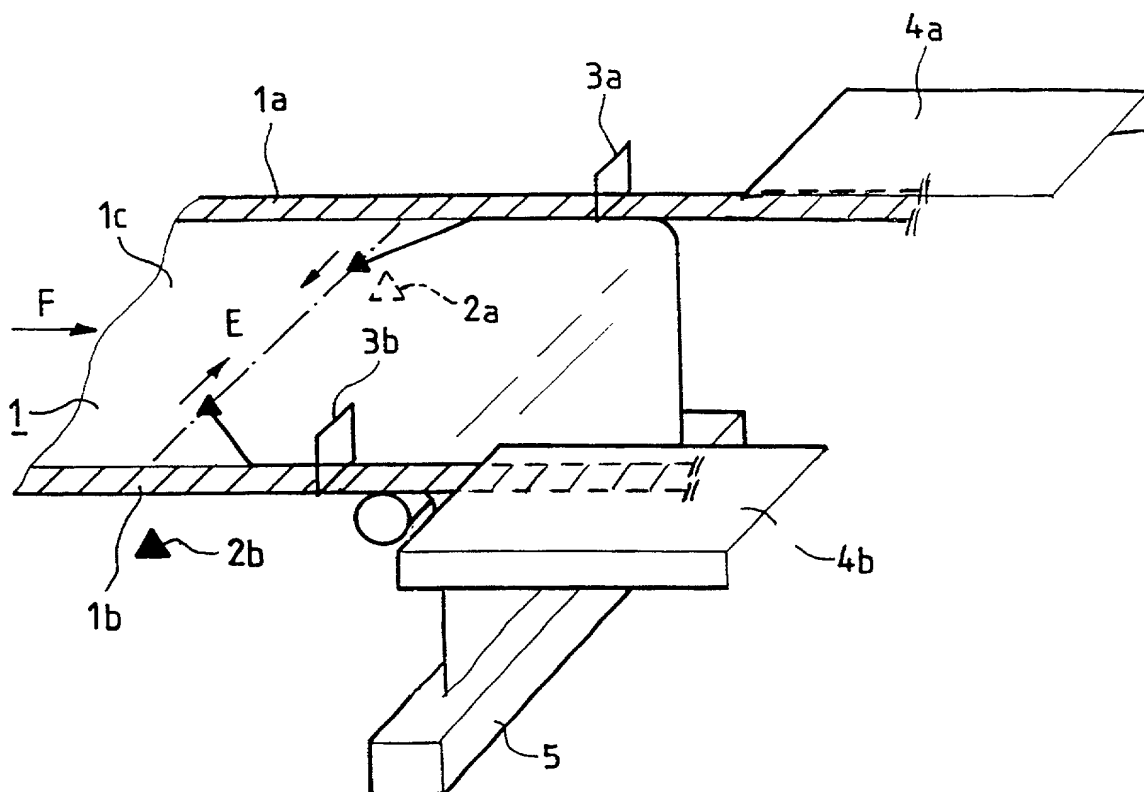
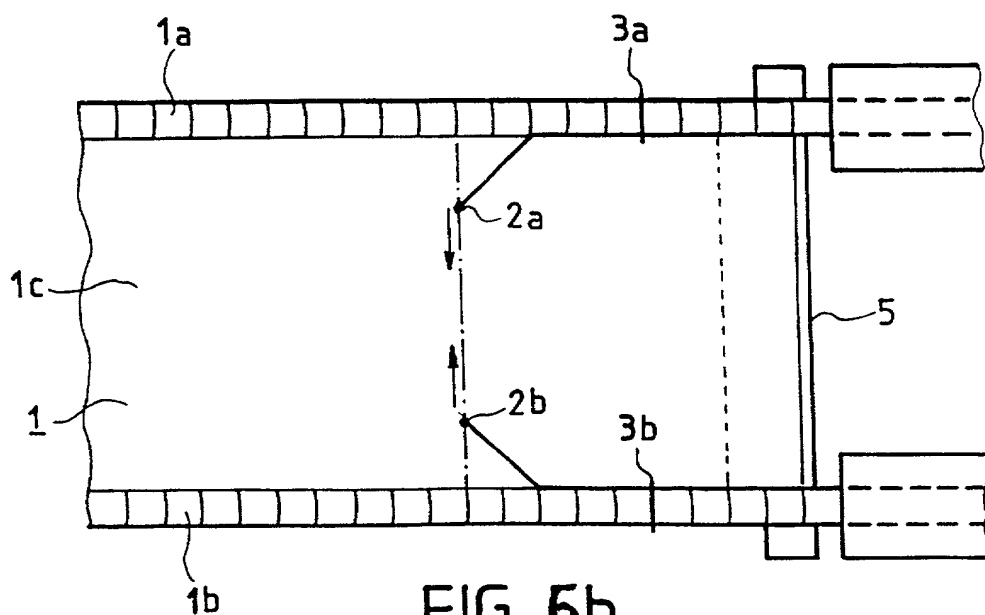


FIG. 6a



FIG_5b

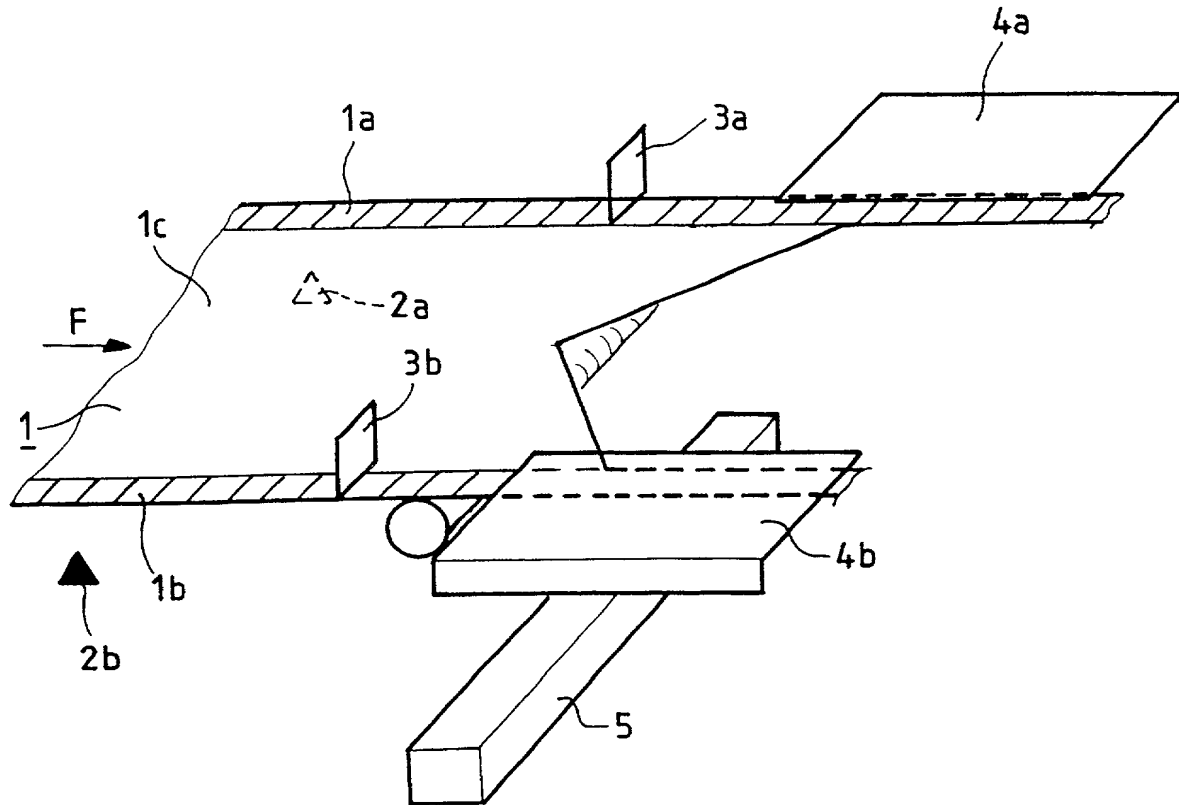


FIG. 7a

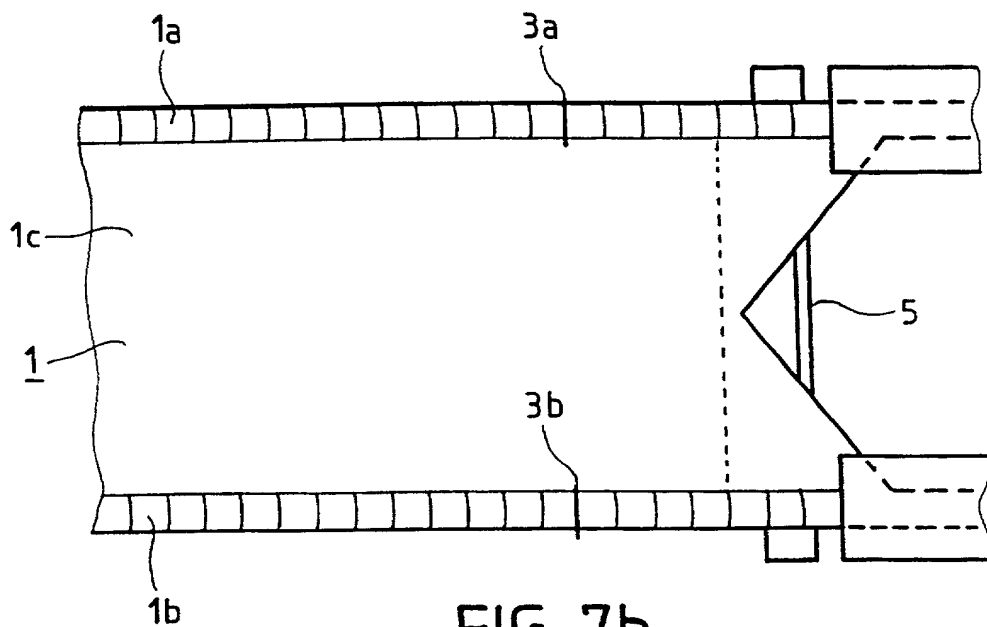
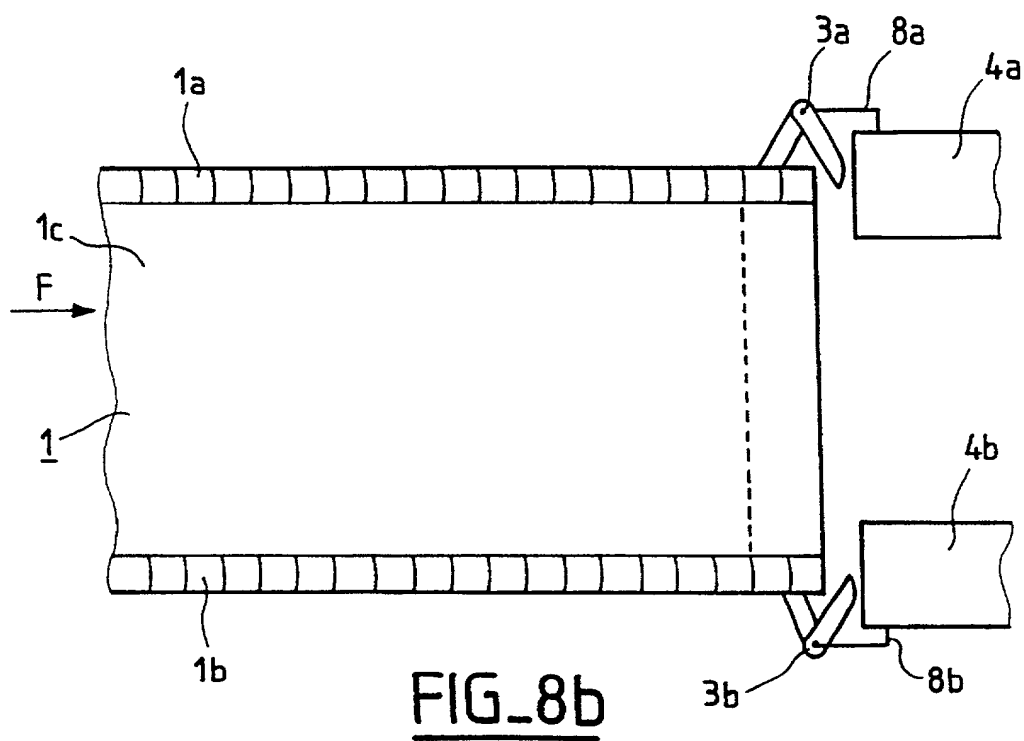
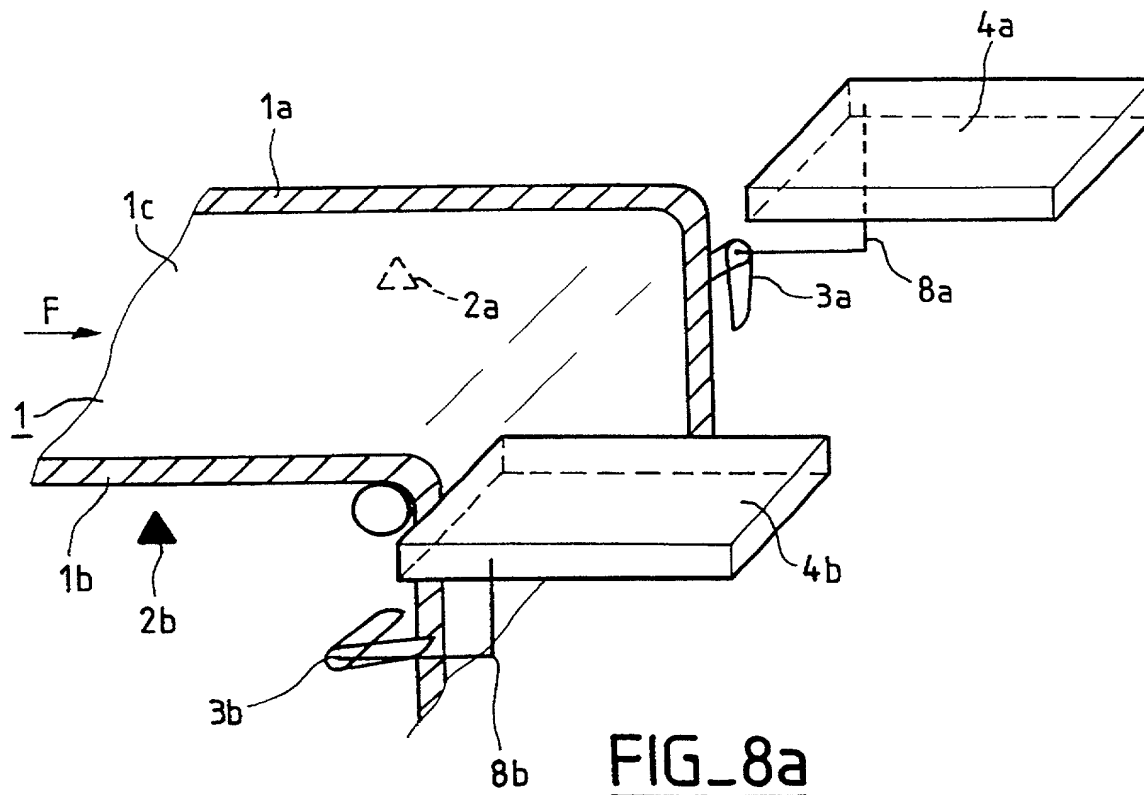
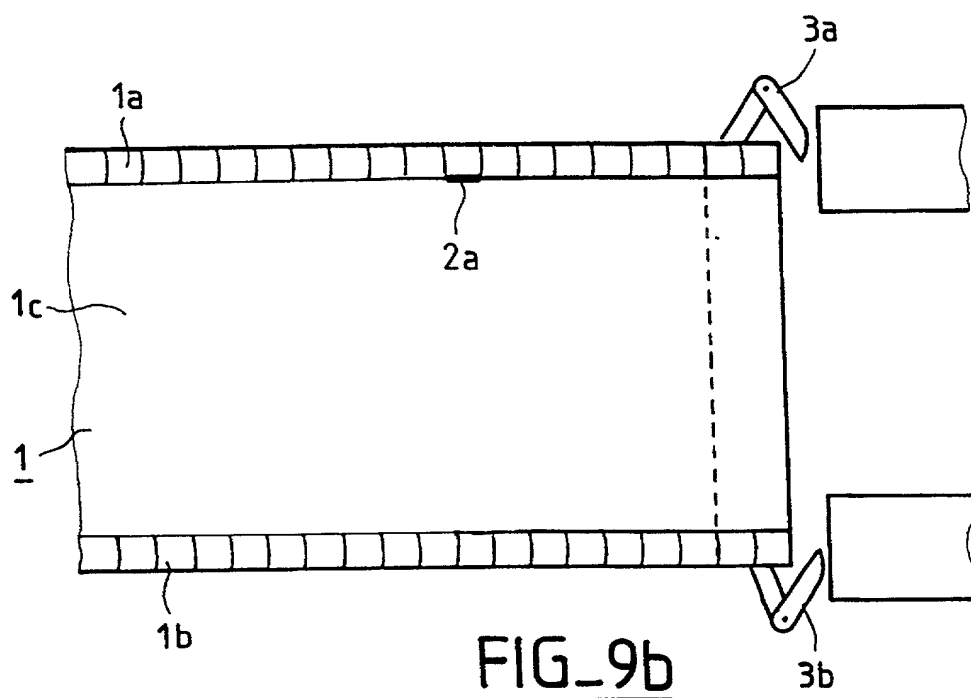
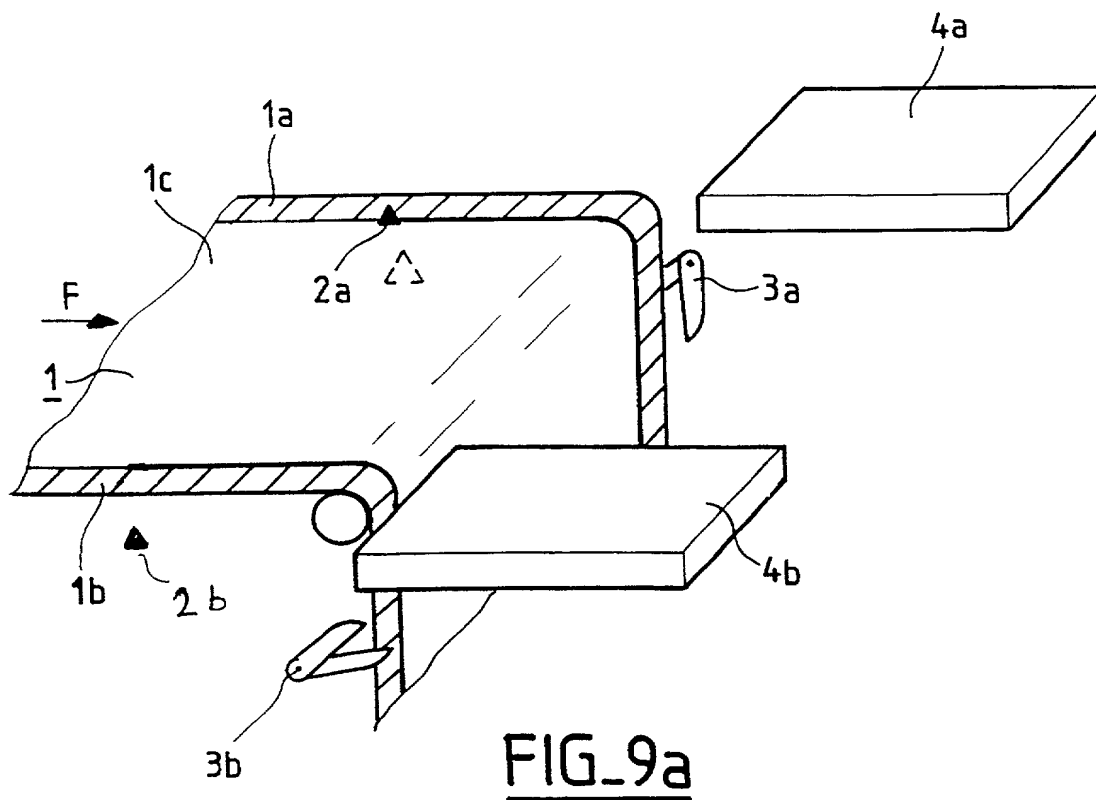
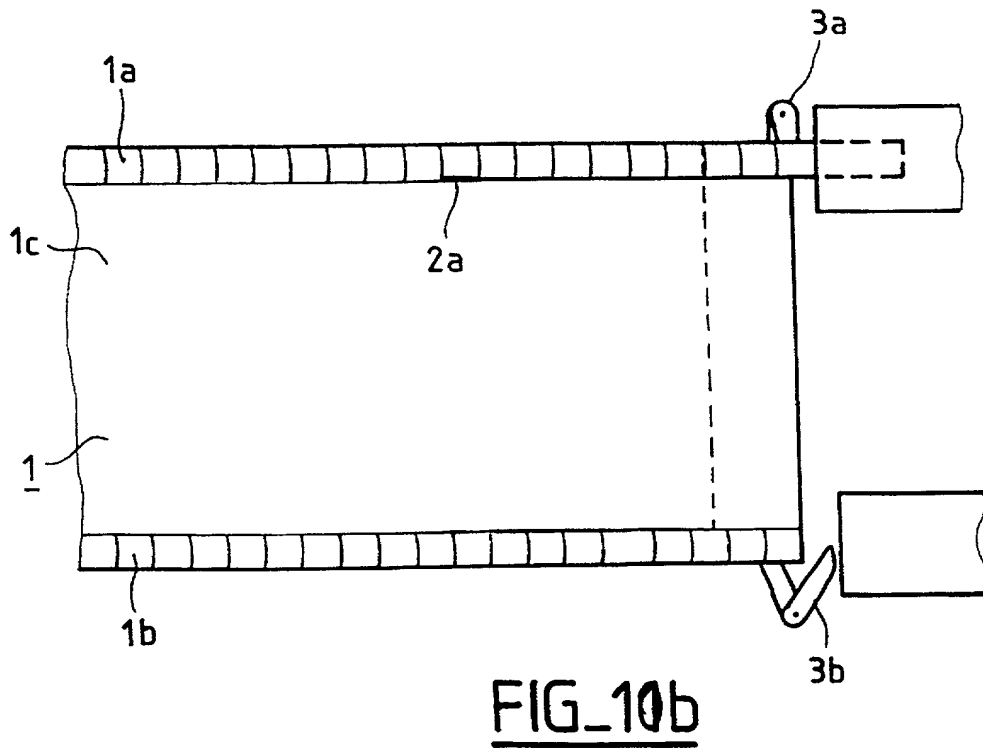
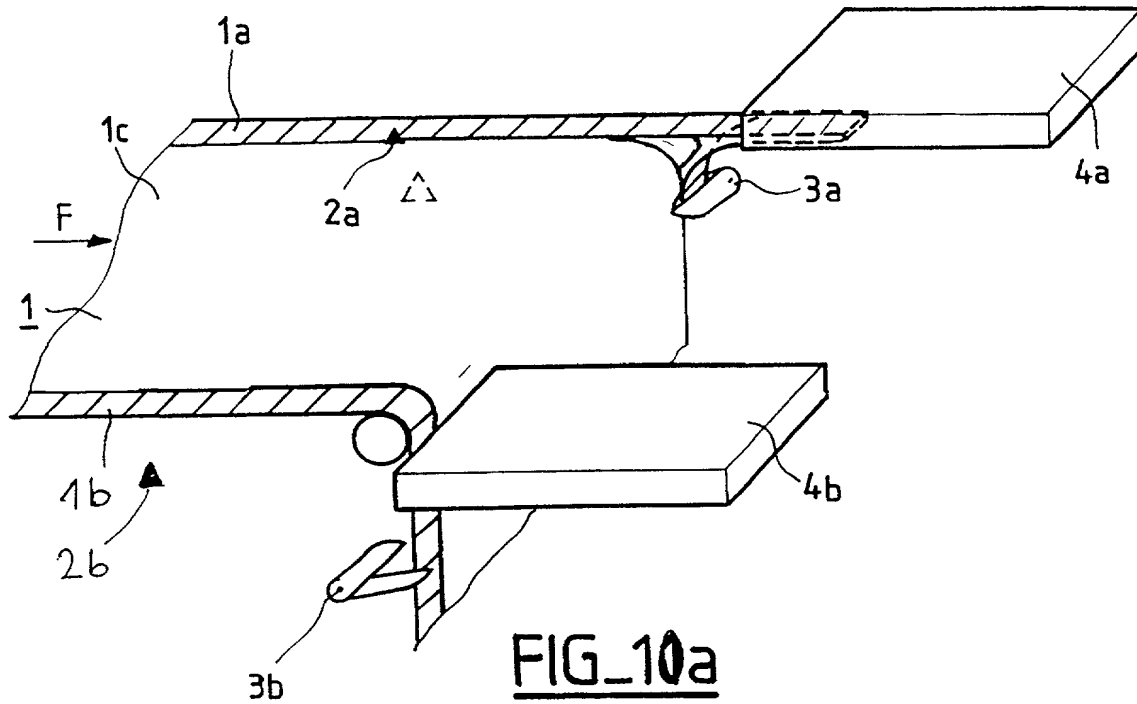
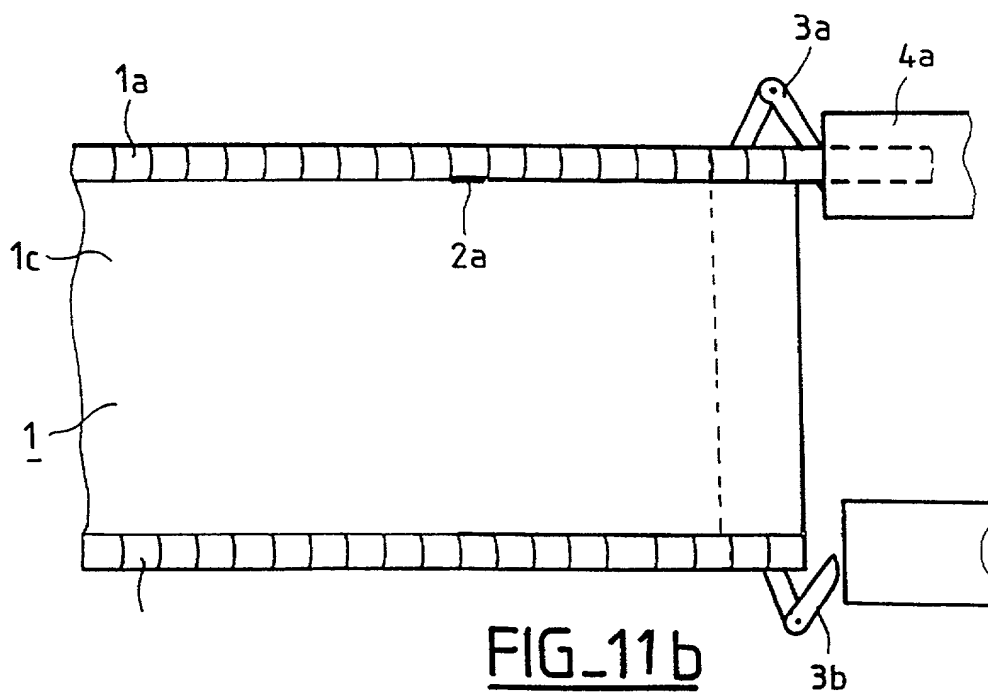
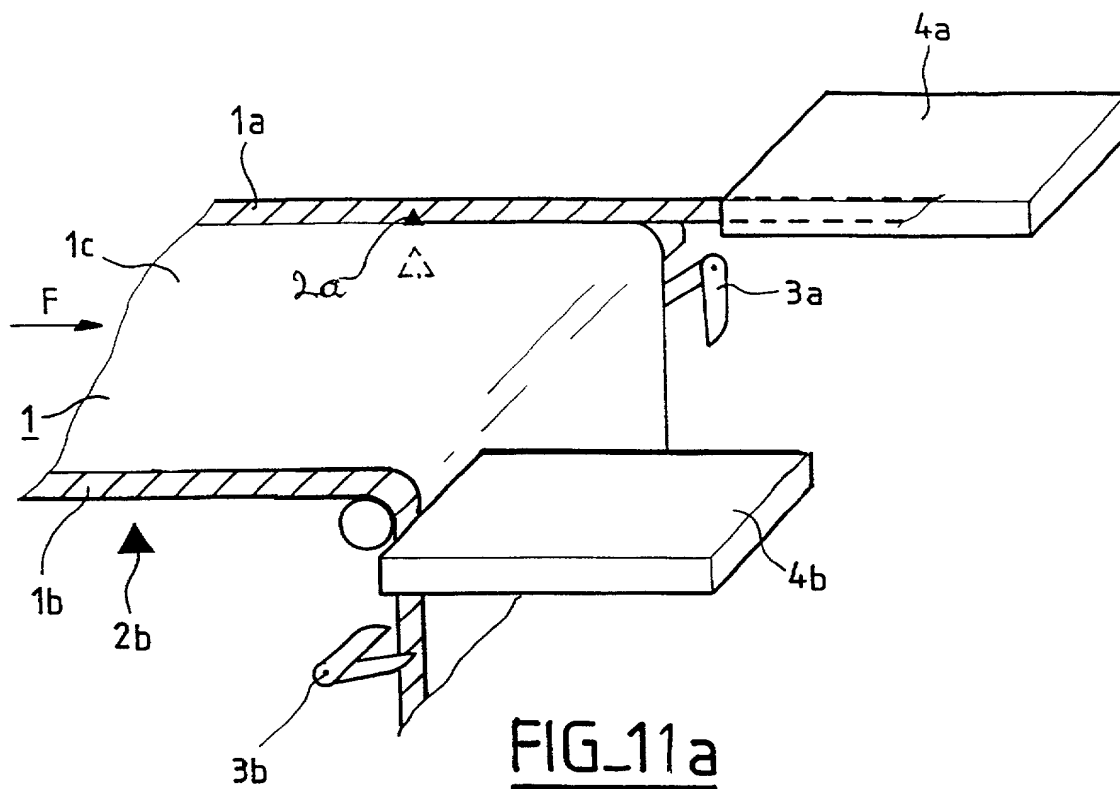


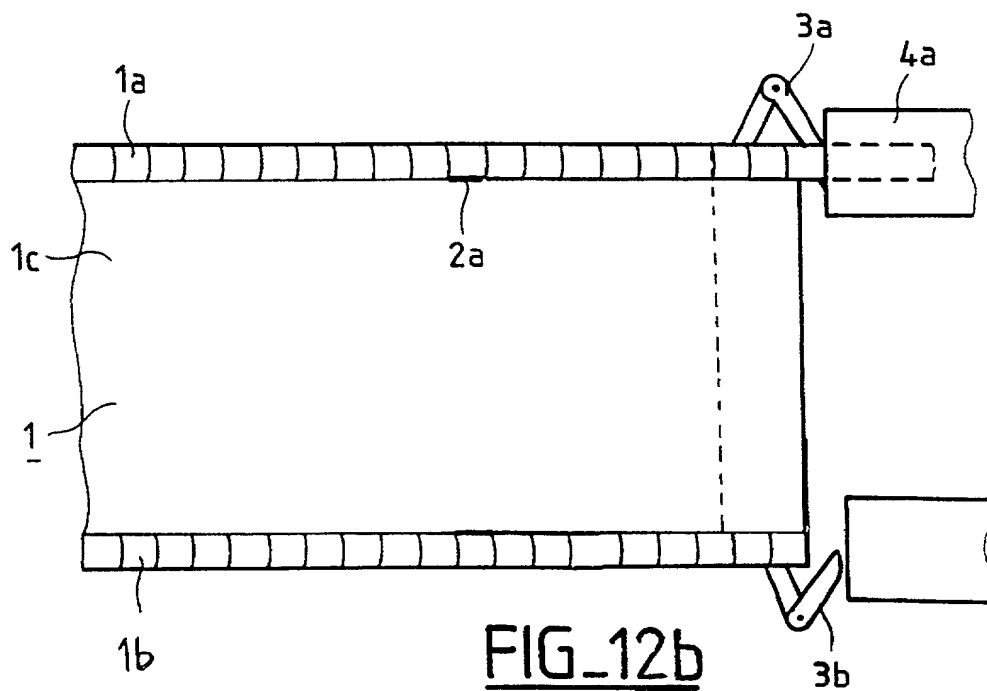
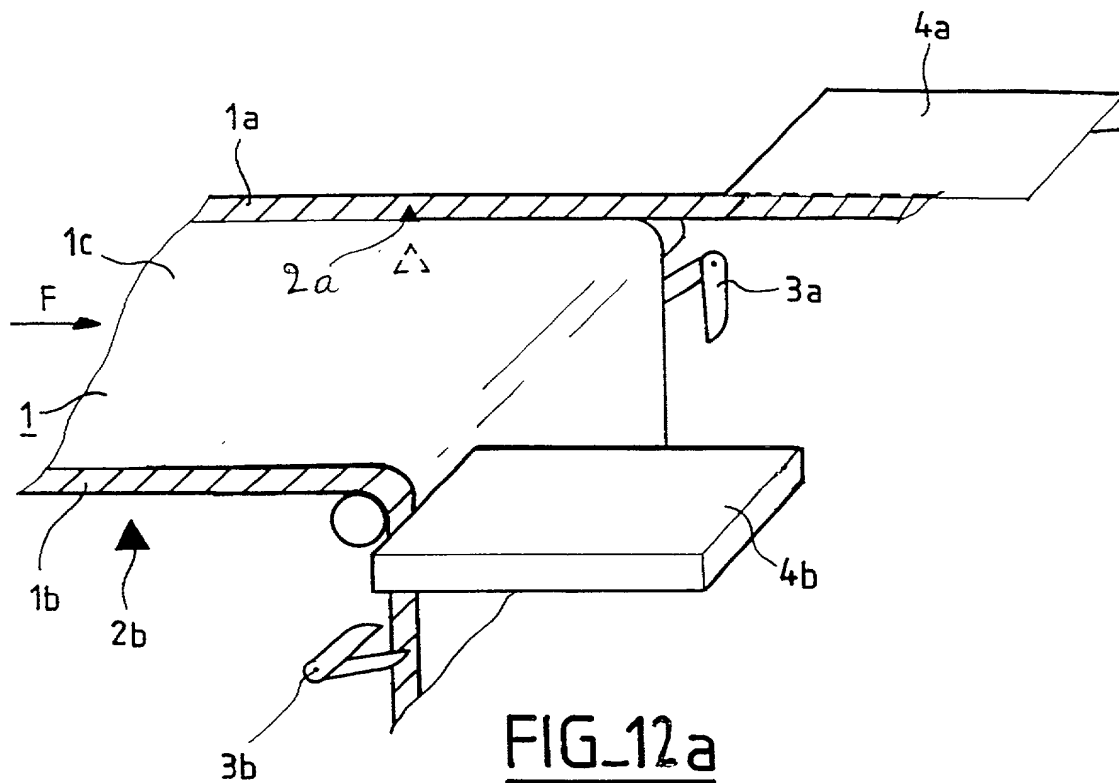
FIG. 7b

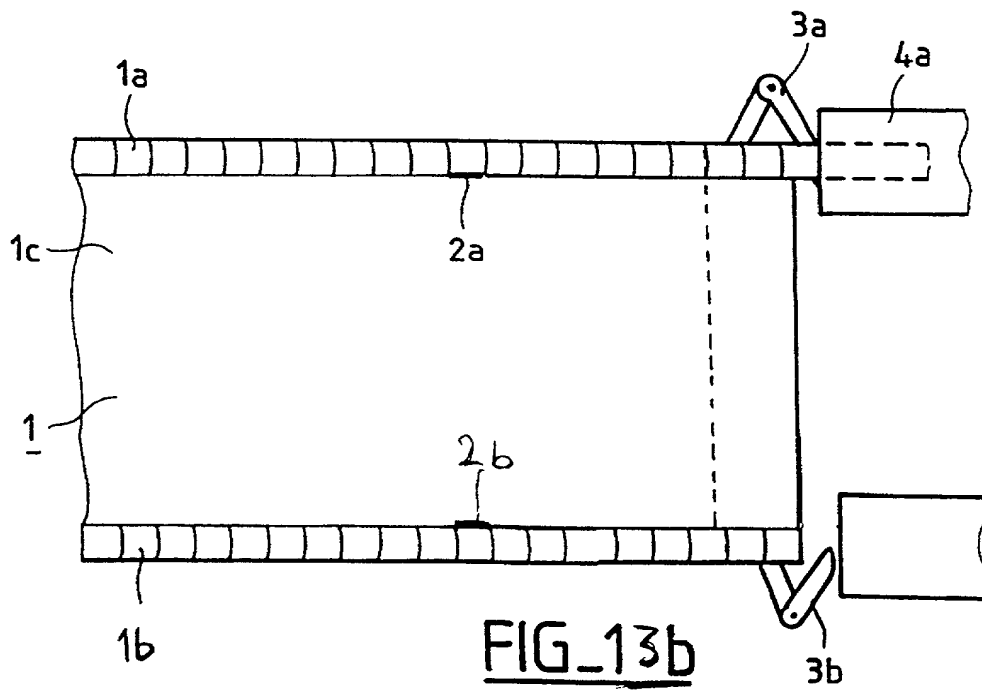
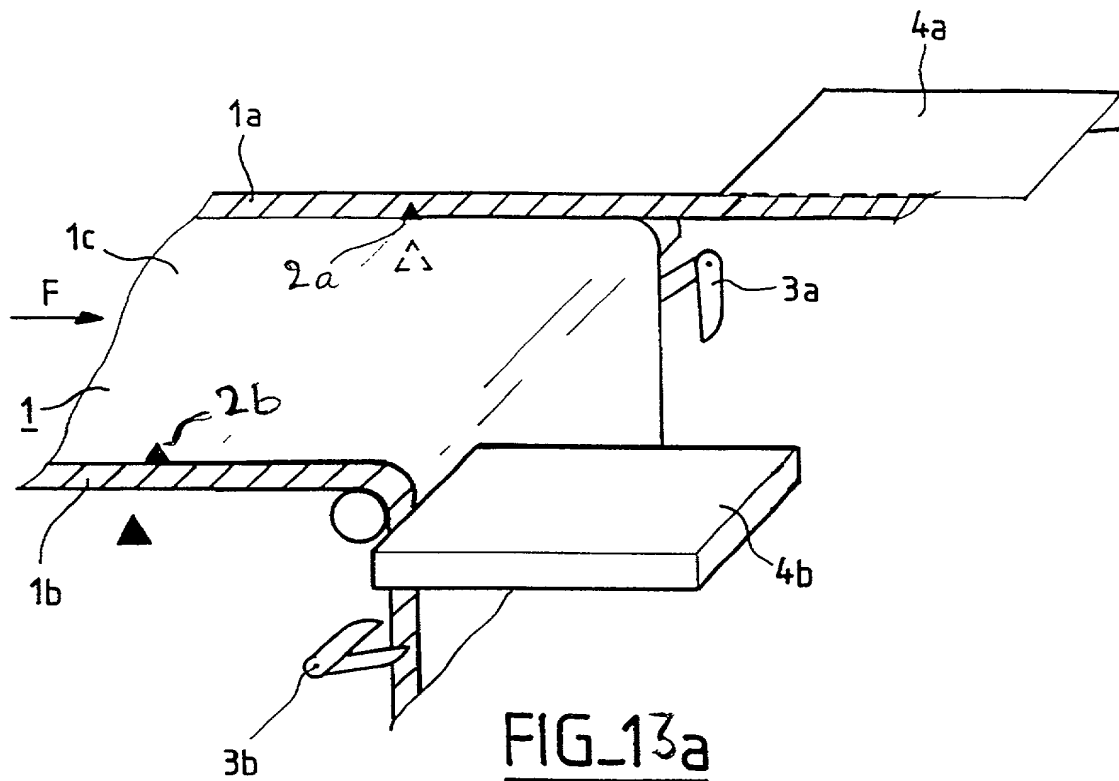


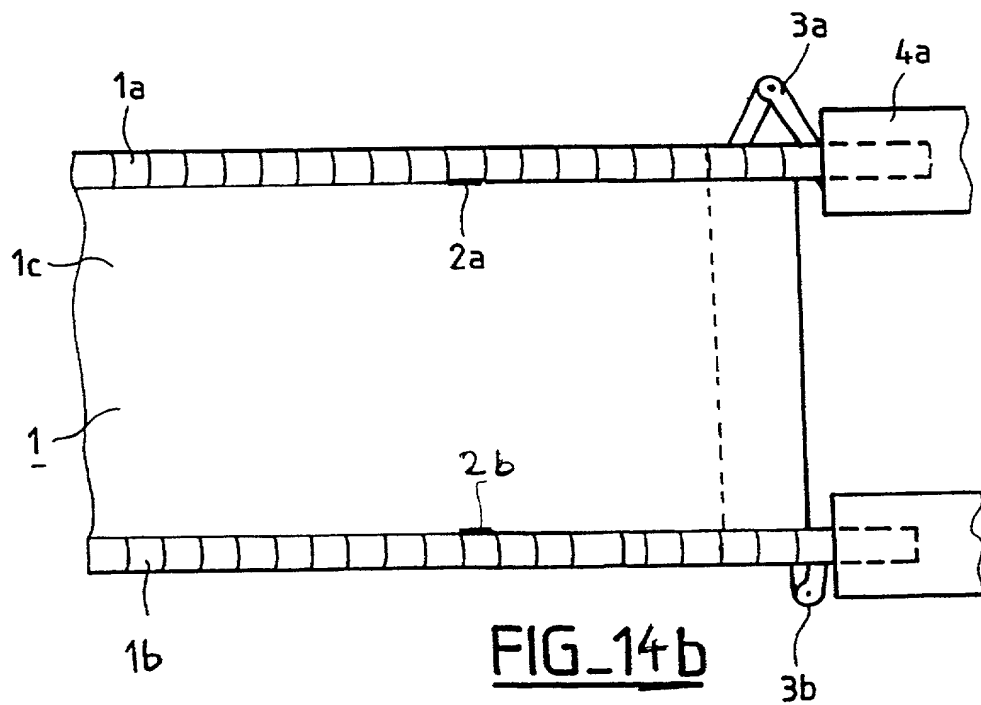
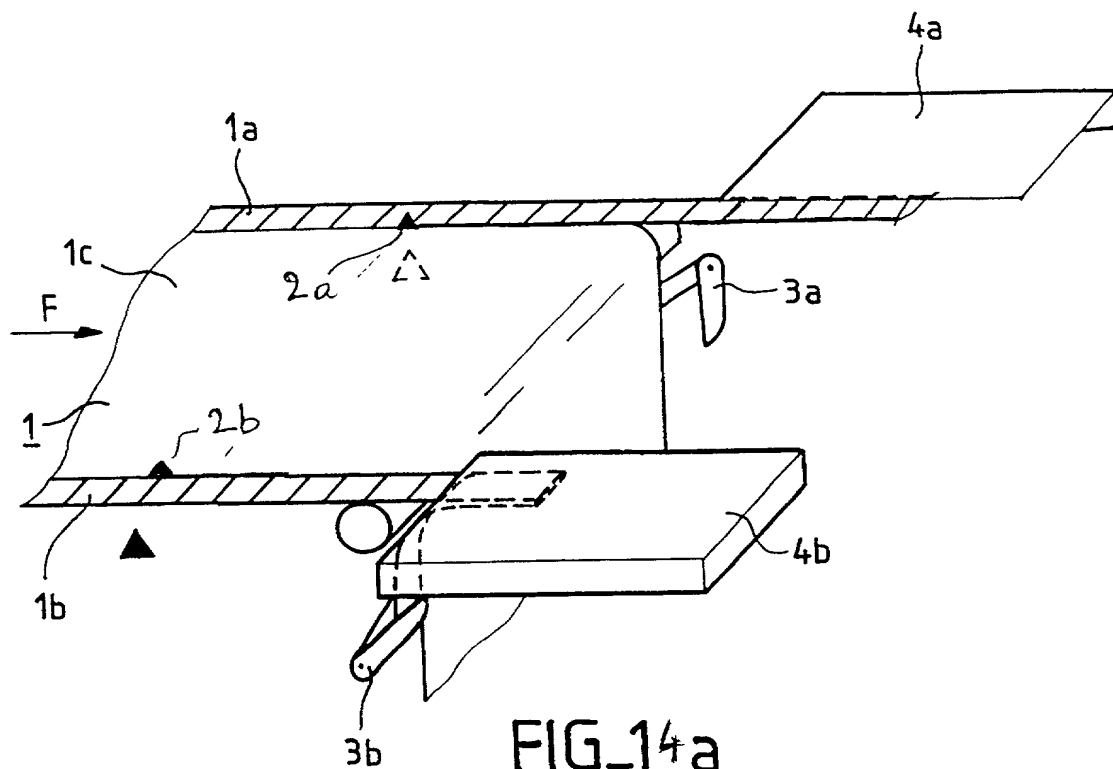


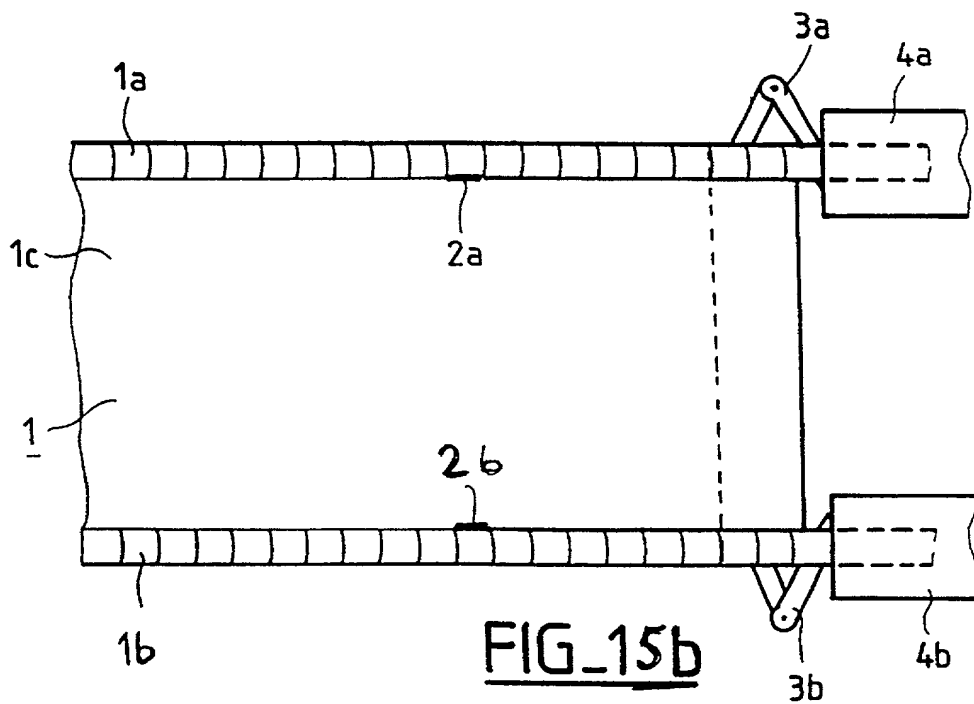
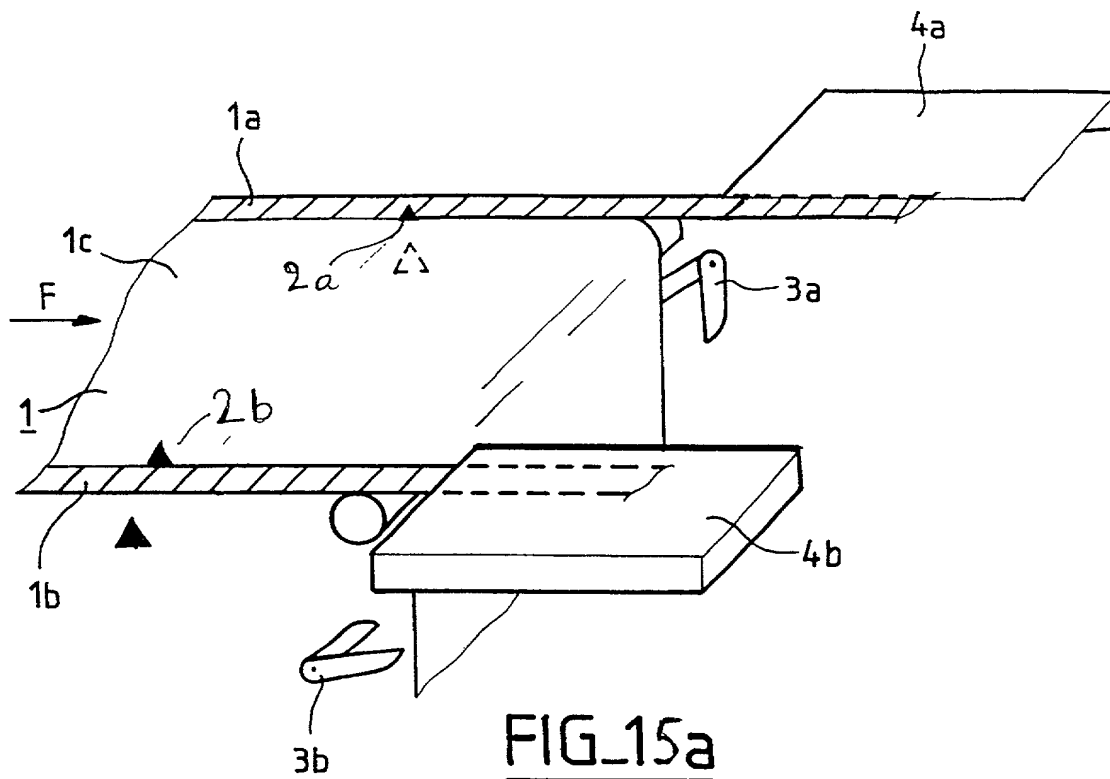


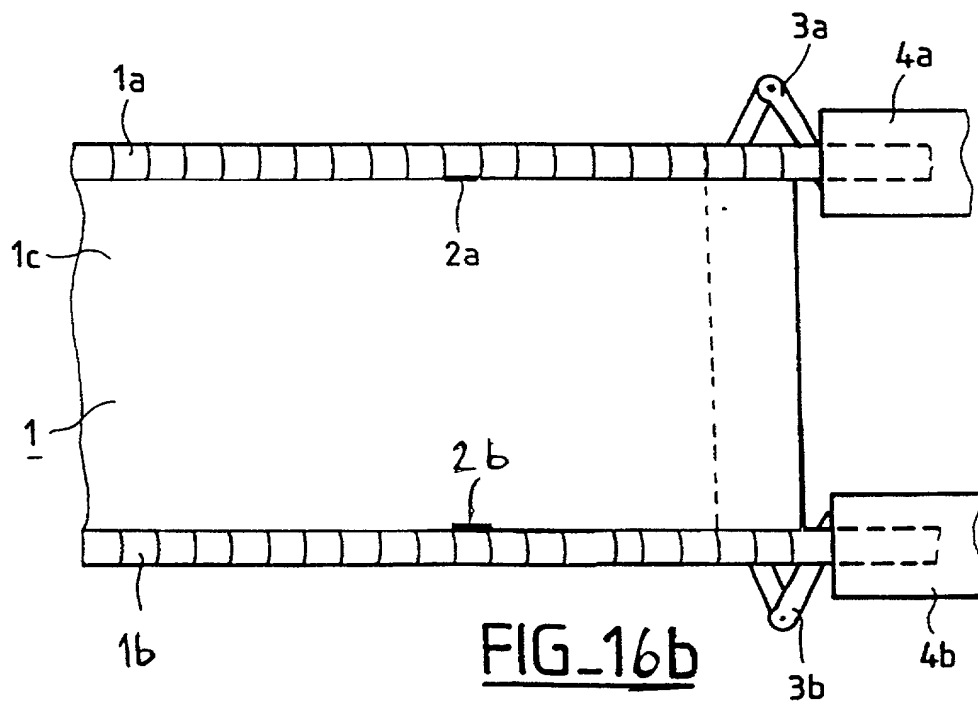
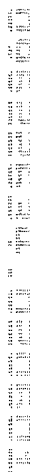












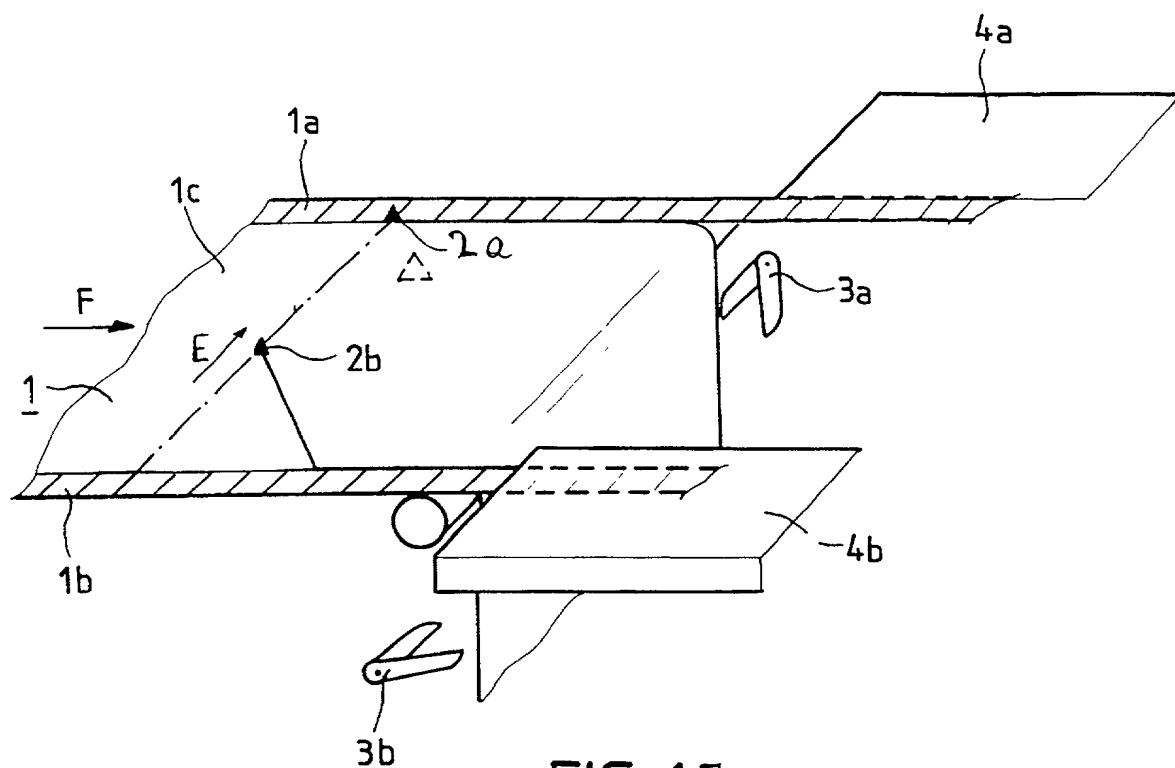


FIG. 17a

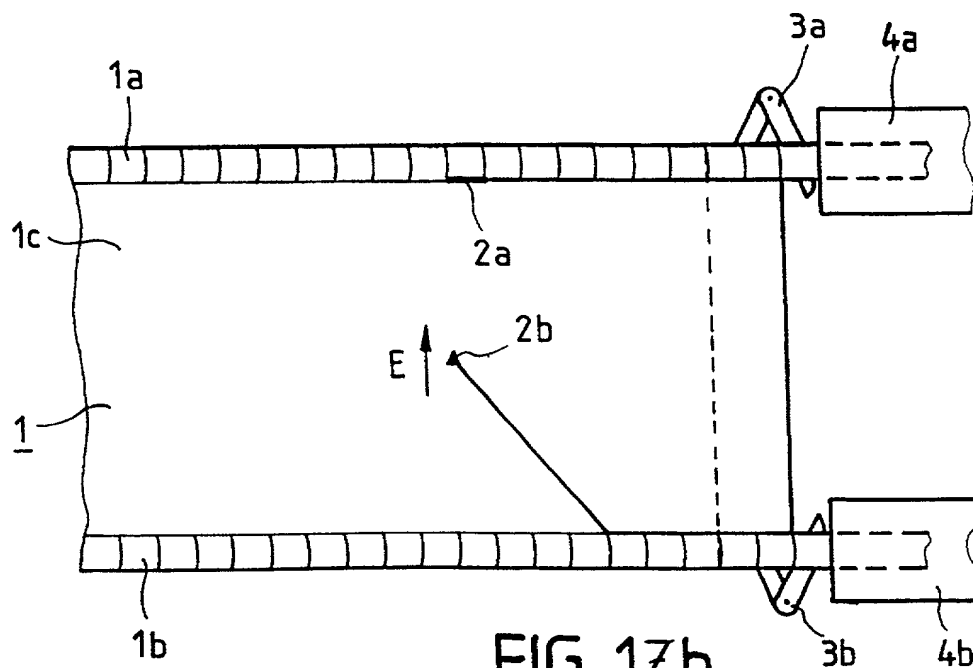
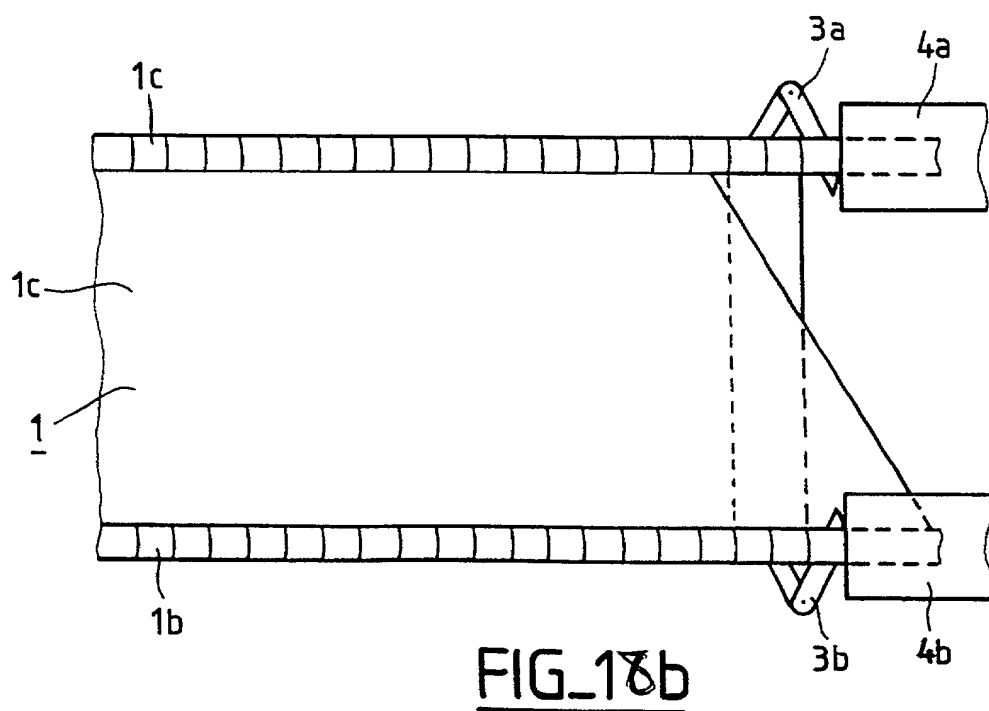
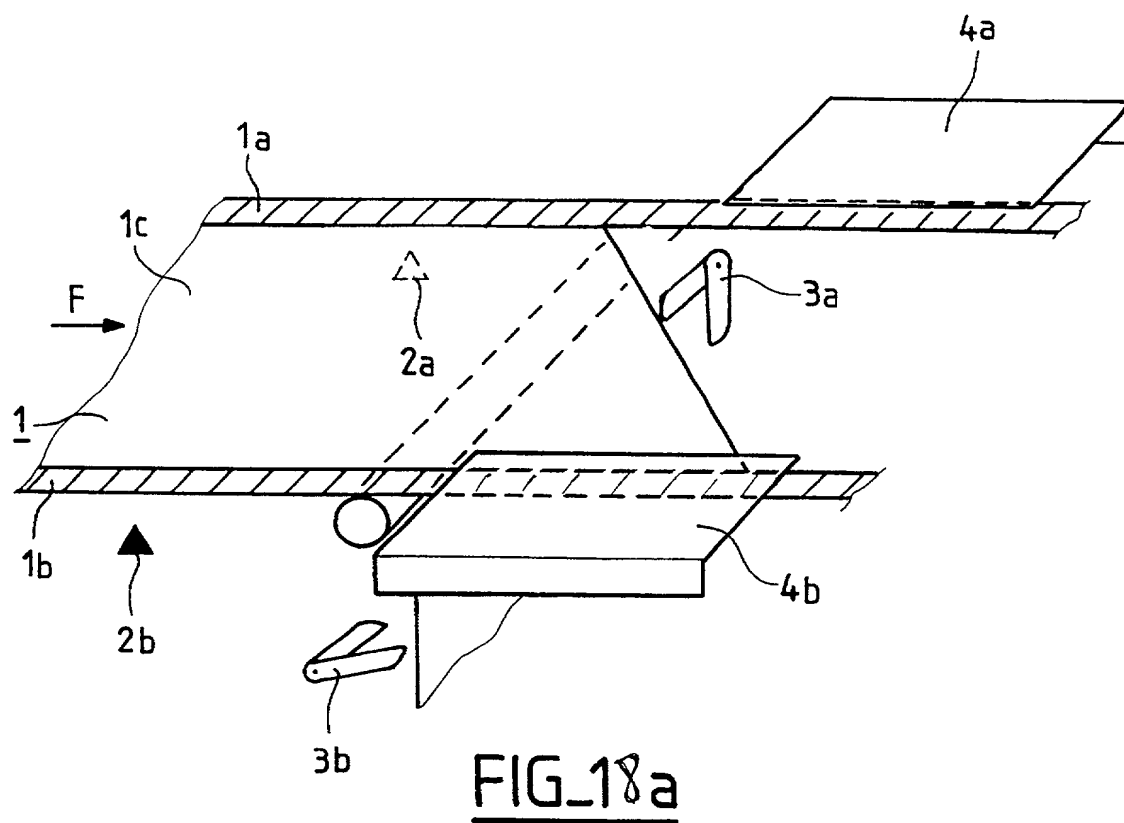
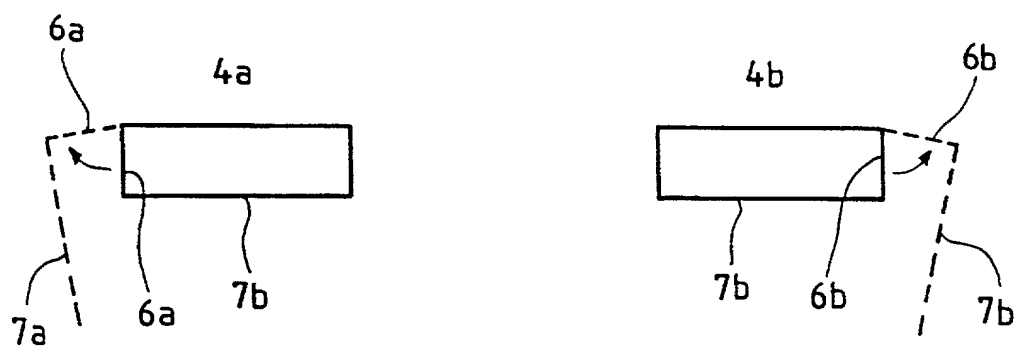


FIG. 17b





FIG_19

GENERAL POWER OF ATTORNEY
(Concerning Several International Patent Applications)

The undersigned, Vernon R. Rice, Vice President and Assistant General Counsel of E. I. DU PONT DE NEMOURS AND COMPANY, 1007 Market Street, Wilmington, Delaware 19898 USA ("DuPont"), hereby confirms that the power to sign for DuPont has been granted to various individuals (as set forth in the attached excerpt from DuPont's Patent Board Rules of Procedure (January 1988), Appendix Section III.A.4), including the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and those individuals who are Assistant Secretaries of the Patent Board. Currently these Assistant Secretaries are:

Roger A. Bowman
Linda J. Davis
John E. Griffiths

Miriam D. Meconnahey
Dorothy W. Shafer
Deborah A. Meginniss

In addition, the authority to act on behalf of DuPont before the competent International Authorities in connection with any and all international patent applications filed by it with the United States as Receiving Office and to make or receive payments on its behalf is hereby granted to:

Beardell, Lori Y.	34,293	Katz, Elliott A.	26,396
Belopolsky, Inna	43,319	Kelly, Patricia L.	39,247
Benjamin, Steven C.	36,087	King, Karen K.	34,850
Birch, Linda D.	38,719	Kuller, Mark D.	31,925
Bowen, Jr., Alanson G.	24,027	Krukiel, Charles E.	27,344
Christenbury, Lynne M.	30,971	Jarnholm, Arne R.	30,396
Cotreau, William J.	36,490	Langworthy, John A.	32,255
Deitch, Gerald E.	30,457	Lerman, Bart E.	31,897
Deshmukh, Sudhir	33,677	Levitt, Cary A.	31,848
Dobson, Kevin S.	40,296	Magee, Thomas H.	27,355
Duffy, Roseanne R.	33,869	Mayer, Nancy S.	29,190
Edwards, Mark A.	39,542	Medwick, George M.	27,456
Estrin, Barry	26,452	Morrissey, Bruce W.	30,663
Evans, Craig H.	31,825	Santopietro, Lois A.	36,264
Fair, Tamera L.	35,867	Schaeffer, Andrew L.	33,605
Feitham, S. Neil	36,506	Sebree, Chyrrea J.	45,348
Floyd, Linda Axiemethy	33,692	Shafer, Robert J.	24,437
Frank, George A.	27,636	Shay, Lucas K.	34,724
Golian, Andrew G.	25,293	Shiple, James E.	32,003
Gorman, Thomas W.	31,959	Siege, Barbara C.	30,684
Gould, David J.	25,338	Sinnott, Jessica M.	34,015
Griffiths, John E.	32,647	Steinberg, Thomas W.	37,013
Hamby, Jane O.	32,872	Stevenson, Robert B.	26,039
Hamby, William H.	31,521	Strickland, Frederick D.	39,041
Heiser, David E.	31,366	Tessari, Joseph A.	32,177
Hendrickson, John S.	30,847	Tulloch, Rebecca W.	36,297
Jones, Brian C.	37,857	Walker, P. Michael	32,602
Joung, J. Kenneth	41,881	Wang, Chen	38,650

The undersigned ratifies fully all actions already taken by the above-named individuals in accordance with the authority granted hereby.

E. I. DU PONT DE NEMOURS AND COMPANY

By: _____

Vernon R. Rice

Vice President and Assistant General Counsel

Date: _____

DECLARATION and POWER OF ATTORNEY

As a below-named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name.

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled:

APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR CUTTING OF A WEB, FEEDING IT INTO A PROCESSING LINE AND THREADING IT UP THROUGH THAT LINE

the specification of which is attached hereto unless the following box is checked:

☒ was filed on **February 5, 1999** as U.S. Application No. _____ or PCT International Application No. **PCT/EP99/00758** and was amended on _____ (if applicable).

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is known to me to be material to patentability as defined in 37 CFR § 1.56.

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or § 365(b) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate, or § 365(a) of any PCT International application which designated at least one country other than the United States, listed below and have also identified below, by checking the box, any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate, or PCT International application having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed.

Application No.	Country	Filing Date	Priority Claimed (Yes/No)
98400426.7	EP	20 FEBRUARY 1998	Yes

I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) of any United States Provisional Application(s) listed below.

U.S. Provisional Application No.	U.S. Filing Date

I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U.S.C. § 120 of any United States application(s), or § 365(c) of any PCT International Application designating the United States, listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States application or PCT International Application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. § 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is known to me to be material to patentability as defined in 37 CFR § 1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT International filing date of this application.

Application No.	Filing Date	Status (patented, pending or abandoned)

POWER OF ATTORNEY: I hereby appoint the following attorney(s) and/or agent(s) the power to prosecute this application and transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith:Name: **ANDREW G. GOLIAN** Registration No. **25,293**

Send correspondence and direct telephone calls to:

ANDREW G. GOLIAN**E. I. du Pont de Nemours and Company**
Legal - Patents
Wilmington, DE 19898, U.S.A.Tel. No.
(302) 892-0747
Fax No.
(302) 892-7343

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issuing thereon.

INVENTOR(S)

Full Name of Inventor 1 - CG	Last Name	First Name	Middle Name
PETITJEAN	PETITJEAN	GILLES	
Signature (please sign full name): <i>Petitjean Gilles</i>		Date: <i>Jan. 16, 2001</i>	
Residence & Citizenship	City	State or Foreign Country	Country of Citizenship
	ARLON Bex	BELGIUM	BE
Post Office Address	Post Office Address	City	State or Country
	70, RUE DE VALLON	ARLON	BELGIUM
			Zip Code
			B-6700
Full Name of Inventor 2 - CG	Last Name	First Name	Middle Name
MARNACH	MARNACH	JOSEPH	ALOYSE
Signature (please sign full name): <i>Joseph Marnach</i>		Date: <i>Jan 16, 2001</i>	
Residence & Citizenship	City	State or Foreign Country	Country of Citizenship
	LAMADELAINE LUX	LUXEMBOURG	LU
Post Office Address	Post Office Address	City	State or Country
	69, RUE DE LA MONTAGNE	LAMADELAINE	LUXEMBOURG
			Zip Code
			L-4879
Full Name of Inventor 3 - CG	Last Name	First Name	Middle Name
NICOLAI	NICOLAI	LUC	MARIE HUBERT ANDRE
Signature (please sign full name): <i>Luc Nicolai</i>		Date: <i>Jan 09, 2001</i>	
Residence & Citizenship	City	State or Foreign Country	Country of Citizenship
	HEINSCH Bex	BELGIUM	BE
Post Office Address	Post Office Address	City	State or Country
	492, ROUTE DE NEUFCHATEAU	HEINSCH	BELGIUM
			Zip Code
			B-6700

☐ Additional Inventors are being named on separately numbered sheets attached hereto.